

**POWER AND CRITIQUE :**  
**FOUCAULT'S CHALLENGE TO HABERMAS**

By  
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## Acknowledgments

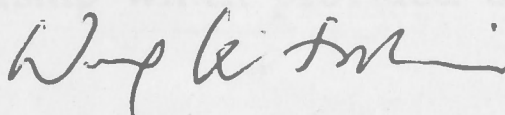
### Declaration

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Mary Hindess, for his valuable advice, constructive comments and prompt feedbacks throughout the process. I am also grateful for his effort in making available as much as possible the resources and facilities that enable me to produce the thesis.

Except where otherwise indicated

this thesis is my original work. I would like to thank the Political Science program, particularly Gillian O'Loughlin for her proof reading my drafts, Mary Hapel for her assistance in the formatting, and Christel Cools for her assistance with administrative and other details.

I express my appreciation to the Australian National University for the grant of a Ph.D. scholarship which provided the financial support necessary for my study.



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To my husband, Jason, and my family so my deepest gratitude for their unfailing support without which the completion of this thesis would not be possible.

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## Abstract

This thesis sees Habermas's and Foucault's projects as presenting two of the most prominent contemporary approaches to power and critique. It argues that Habermas's approach can be considered in terms of a juridico-discursive model whereas Foucault's approach as a strategic model. A juridico-discursive model represents power as operating like a law which prohibits and negates. It seeks to submit power to the rules of right and is preoccupied with the tasks of drawing boundaries, setting limits and establishing principles of legitimation. A strategic model, in contrast, focuses on the deployment of power and the totality of means by which power effects are produced. This thesis examines Foucault's challenge to Habermas's theory by elaborating on the perspective of a strategic model.

The first part of the thesis presents a critical exposition of Habermas's theory. It shows that Habermas's project is preoccupied with the task of constructing a basis for the differentiation of reason and unreason, achievements and evils of the Enlightenment, legitimate and illegitimate power. The second part of the thesis elaborates on the perspective of a strategic model and its challenges to Habermas's theory. It demonstrates the productive-ness of power, and the complex interplay between power and (1) knowledges and truths, (2) subjectivities, (3) Enlightenment discourses and reforms. The thesis argues that critique can no longer rely upon an a priori notion of truth, subject or reason. Rather than adopting a normative approach which relies upon a procedure of simple division and rejection, we should problematize the specific relations between power on the one hand, and certain knowledges, subjectivities, Enlightenment discourses and reforms on the other. Foucault's approach maintains a respect for the complexities of the productive effects of power, while experimenting with ways of transgressing the limits that are imposed on us.

This thesis represents an attempt to recast the Habermas/Foucault debate. I see that when the debate is construed in Habermasian terms, Foucault's work is often criticized in terms of its failure to provide a normative ground for critique, and its use is regarded as limited. I suggest that there are different ways of using Foucault's work. In adopting a normative approach, some commentators fail to appreciate the extent and nature of Foucault's insights into the mechanisms through which power effects are produced. In the concluding chapter, I take issue with the criticism of Foucault's lack of a normative ground and discuss how we should treat the role of normative framework in critique.

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## Introduction

### PART I

## HABERMAS'S THEORY OF POWER

Habermas and Foucault have been seen as two opposing figures in discussions of social and political theory. Although Foucault's essays on "What is Enlightenment?" allows some observers to treat him as an ally of the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory, there is still a tendency to see them as opposites. This chapter aims to provide the ground of critique. Habermas, who is perhaps the most formidable critic of Foucault, pursues this criticism. He criticizes that Foucault "contrasts his critique of power with the 'analysis of truth' in such a fashion that the former becomes deprived of the normative yardsticks that it would have to borrow from the latter". He thinks that Foucault's critical project, for all its insights, is nevertheless enmeshed in serious "performative contradictions" (Habermas, 1985:168). Habermas's criticism of Foucault has been accorded by a number of critics.<sup>1</sup> Even Bernstein, who attempts to have a "more sympathetic reading of what Foucault is doing", concludes that "Foucault's own inviting rhetoric of disruption forces us to raise questions, and at the same time, appears to deny us any means for effectively dealing with these questions" (Bernstein, 1992:305).

While acknowledging the importance of the issue of the ground of critique, I do not take it as the basis on which we should dismiss Foucault's work. I see that there are difficulties created by Foucault's suspending the questions of the ground of critique, and Foucault may need to provide an answer to the question of "why fight?", but there are also problems with Habermas's way of treating Foucault. The first part of this chapter will be

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to Habermas's critique of Foucault, Fraser (1984) has criticized Foucault in terms of "normative confusions" and suggested that he must elaborate a normative framework for his critique. Taylor (1986) argues that Foucault's critique, which aims at liberation, requires notions of truth and freedom. Foucault's refusal to elaborate a notion of truth or freedom is seen as contradictory to the intent of his work. For discussions which for the most part follow Habermas's argument, see Frundlieb, 1983; White, 1986; and Wolff, 1986.



## Introduction

Habermas and Foucault have been seen as two opposing figures in discussions of social and political theory, although Foucault's essays on "What is Enlightenment?" allows some observers to treat him as an ally of the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory. Nevertheless, there is still a tendency to dismiss Foucault's work on the basis of his failure to provide the ground of critique. Habermas, who is perhaps the most formidable critic of Foucault, pursues this criticism. He criticizes that Foucault "contrasts his critique of power with the 'analysis of truth' in such a fashion that the former becomes deprived of the normative yardsticks that it would have to borrow from the latter". He thinks that Foucault's critical project, for all its insights, is nevertheless enmeshed in serious "performative contradictions" (Habermas, 1986:108). Habermas's criticism of Foucault has been seconded by a number of critics.<sup>1</sup> Even Bernstein, who attempts to have a "more sympathetic reading of what Foucault is doing", concludes that "Foucault's own inciting rhetoric of disruption forces us to raise questions, and at the same time, appears to deny us any means for effectively dealing with these questions" (Bernstein, 1992:305).

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devoted to a discussion of these problems. I want to point out that Habermas's criticisms of Foucault are made in terms of his own preoccupation and his own language, and hence deprive Foucault's work of the right to stand on its own. If Habermas had taken the nature of Foucault's project more seriously, the question of "why fight?" should at least have been addressed in a more appropriate way, that is, in a way which fits into the specific nature of Foucault's project. Furthermore, Habermas's failure to consider Foucault's work on its own terms leads to his inability to see the insights and the challenges that Foucault's work has for him. Instead of simply criticizing Foucault in Habermas's terms, I suggest that we need to look more closely at the issues that Foucault wants to address and the nature of his project. Only in this way can we begin to appreciate the insights of Foucault's work as well as the challenges that it may have for Habermas.

In this thesis, I attempt to recast the debate between Habermas and Foucault by examining Foucault's challenges to Habermas's theory of power. To recast the debate in this way, however, is not intended to be an affirmation of the overall superiority of Foucault's work to Habermas's. I acknowledge that Foucault's work also has its weaknesses and limitations, and in the course of the discussion of Foucault's challenges in later chapters I shall raise problems about Foucault's analyses. In examining Foucault's challenge to Habermas, the purpose is to criticize Habermas; yet, as discussed in the second part of this chapter, the criticism is not as much a negation as a reflection on the limits and inadequacies of Habermas's theory. I suggest that Foucault's work shows the inadequacies of Habermas's analyses particularly when they are related to the question of the ways in which power effects are produced and maintained. Moreover, Foucault's work opens up the possibility of conducting critique without necessarily appealing to notions of truth or any normative ideals, and this implies an alternative to Habermas's way of critique which is preoccupied with the question of the ground of critique.

In the third part of this Introductory Chapter, I shall briefly summarize the contents of each of the following chapters in this thesis and elaborate on what I consider to be the strengths of Foucault's approach to power and critique.

## I

The perception of Habermas and Foucault as two opposing figures basically has to do with Habermas's rejectionist criticism of Foucault's work. In a short but pungent essay titled "Modernity versus Postmodernity", Habermas identifies Foucault as one of those "young conservatives" who adopt an antimodern stance and elaborate a totalist critique of modernity (Habermas, 1981:13). Habermas, in contrast, locates his own project in the theoretical tradition that runs from Marx to the Frankfurt School. This tradition, as Habermas understands it, while critical of the problems of power and domination in modern societies, nevertheless, recognizes the achievements of the Enlightenment and still retains a certain hope of the emancipatory potential of the modern world.

In a later work, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas (1987a:265-93) devotes two chapters to criticizing Foucault. In addition to an antimodern position, Habermas now identifies Foucault's positions as positivist, cryptonormativist and relativist. Let me explain what Habermas means. Habermas refers to the "felicitous positivistic" stance that Foucault claims for himself in describing the contingent, historical regimes of power/knowledge. This stance requires withholding or bracketing any evaluating judgement of the historically changing practices. Such pure "ascetic" description leads to relativism in the sense that there is no basis from which one can evaluate or judge these power/knowledge regimes. But Foucault does not consistently assume such a position. He exhibits "the passion of aesthetic modernism". He assumes a position of "arbitrary



partisanship of a criticism that cannot account for its normative foundations" (Habermas, 1987a:275-6).

Habermas's criticism is seconded by a number of critics. White and Wolin, in particular, examine what Habermas describes as Foucault's "passion of aesthetic modernism". Wolin (1986), in his critique of Foucault, considers Foucault's aestheticism as an exclusive primacy of an artistic approach to life, in opposition to science and morality. This approach, for Wolin, is extremely one-sided and inadequate, as it provides no trace of human solidarity or mutuality, and is insensible to other human values. White (1986), in his essay "Foucault's challenge to critical theory", seems to be more willing to consider Foucault's insights. He sees that Foucault's contribution lies in his drawing our attention to the subjugation of the aesthetic-expressive capacities in our modern fixation on cognitive and juridical subjectivity. Nevertheless, preoccupied with the question of the basis of critique, White argues that Foucault's notion of aesthetic subjectivity is inadequate in providing a basis for the endorsement of new social movements. He contends that what Foucault needs is a notion of juridical subjectivity which is emphasized in Habermas's work. As Foucault lacks a notion of juridical subjectivity, White concludes that Foucault ultimately provides a less satisfactory account than Habermas.

The appearance of Foucault's essays on "What is Enlightenment?" -- in which he identifies the affinities between his project and the Enlightenment -- may lead critics to reconsider Foucault's relation to Reason and to the Enlightenment. McCarthy (1990), a well-known commentator of Habermas's work and the Frankfurt School, considers that both Foucault and the Frankfurt School are engaged in a critique of impure reason. He suggests that Foucault's work is better understood as a continuation and enrichment of the critical-theoretical tradition of Habermas and the Frankfurt School than a break from or antithesis of it. In his view, there are a number of affinities between Foucault's work and Critical Theory, and, in particular, Habermas's picture of the colonization

of lifeworld overlaps with Foucault's picture of a disciplinary society. Nevertheless, despite the friendly gesture that he adopts, McCarthy criticizes Foucault's work from a perspective similar to Habermas's. McCarthy maintains that Foucault's major problems lie in his ontologizing the concept of power and his failure to justify genealogy so that it is not simply another power moving in a thoroughly power-ridden network of social relations. Corresponding with the conclusion drawn by White and Wolin, McCarthy decides that neither Foucault's ontology of power nor his later concern with self-creation offers an adequate framework for critical social inquiry.

While acknowledging the difficulties created by Foucault's suspension of the question of the basis of critique, I would like to point out that the readings of Foucault by Wolin, White and McCarthy are not without problems. Preoccupied with the issue of the ground of critique, they tend to overlook the specific nature of Foucault's project, and this leads to misunderstanding and misuse of Foucault's ideas. For instance, Foucault's discussion of an aesthetics of existence is read as an attempt to articulate a certain notion of subject or a certain normative basis of critique. Foucault, however, emphasizes that it is not intended to be used in that way. In contrast to White and Wolin's interpretation of his argument, Foucault states that the notion of an aesthetics of existence is not to be viewed as "a key to everything", and one must not treat them as "a principle", "a basis" that exists in history and is now rediscovered (Foucault, 1988a:14-15). From this perspective, the criticism of the inadequacy of Foucault's notion in providing a normative basis of critique is misplaced. We must examine more closely what the notion is intended to do and what issues Foucault wants to address so as to avoid a misunderstanding and misuse of his ideas. Habermas's reading of Foucault's essay "What is Enlightenment?", I contend, makes the same mistake.

Foucault's essay "What is Enlightenment?" is received by Habermas as a sign of Foucault's finally recognizing the contradiction of his critique. This contradiction, in Habermas's view, is a result of Foucault's critique of

truth and power which deprives itself of the basis of critique. The tension between Foucault's earlier work and the position announced in "What is Enlightenment?", for Habermas, reveals exactly this kind of contradiction. Habermas (1986:106-8) sees that in the end the force of this contradiction draws Foucault back into the circle of the philosophical discourse of modernity that Foucault thought he could explode. From Foucault's perspective, however, his discussions of Enlightenment in the earlier work as well as in his later essays do not reveal any contradiction of positions. Habermas's view of Foucault holding contradictory positions in fact reveals what Foucault calls the "blackmail" of the Enlightenment, that is, it insists that one is either "for" or "against" the Enlightenment. Foucault would not admit that his earlier work represents an anti-Enlightenment position; nor would he admit that his essay "What is Enlightenment?" takes a pro-Enlightenment position. This is exactly "a simplistic and authoritarian alternative" that he tries to overturn (Foucault, 1986f:42-4).

Habermas tends to read Foucault's essay "What is Enlightenment?" as a sign of Foucault's concession of defeat. This misreading of Foucault's essay, I contend, is a result of his failure to consider and evaluate Foucault's work on its own terms. Habermas's critique of Foucault in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* demonstrates the same problem.<sup>2</sup> Habermas criticizes Foucault on several grounds; including first, Foucault's positivism; second, Foucault's relativism; and third, Foucault's lack of a normative basis. Habermas's criticisms, as I shall show, reveal

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<sup>2</sup> Dean (1994:128-9) argues that despite Foucault's claim to have escaped modernist narcissism, Habermas understands Foucault's work as an attempt to characterize modernity and as that which can be located within or in relation to the philosophical discourse of modernity. He refuses to read Foucault "as operating in any field other than the one he has outlined and defined the possible positions within". By translating Foucault's work into the discourse of modernity, Habermas could then attribute a general position to him, such as anti-modern, or that of a "young conservative". Dean says that not only is Foucault positioned as a dogmatic critic of modernity, but, as I argue here, his work is translated into the terms of critical theory. Dean (1994) criticizes the reading of Foucault from the perspective of Habermas's philosophy of history, and suggests to read Foucault in terms of a critical and effective form of history.



that he has not put himself into the place of Foucault.<sup>3</sup> He examines Foucault's intention and concern, but never tries to listen to Foucault's voice. Despite his knowledge of Foucault's work, his criticism is exclusively based on his own perspective. In this way, I argue, Habermas fails to appreciate the insights of Foucault's work and the kinds of challenge it may have for his theoretical framework.

Habermas criticizes Foucault's genealogy as a kind of positivism which seeks to give a value-free historiography. He says that Foucault demands of his work the objectivity of a purely structural analysis, and excludes value judgement in favour of value-free historical explanation. Hence, Habermas continues, genealogy "retreats into the reflectionless objectivity of a nonparticipatory, ascetic description of kaleidoscopically changing practices of power" (Habermas, 1987a:275-6).<sup>4</sup> Habermas also claims that the positivism of Foucault's genealogy has to do with Foucault's intention of constructing a better science. In his eyes, Foucault not only aims at the critical unmasking of the pseudo-science of human sciences, but has "a serious intent of getting a science underway that is superior to the mismanaged science" (Habermas, 1987a:279).

Rajchman points out that this criticism is based on a misunderstanding of Foucault's passage in which he refers to the felicitous positivism of a genealogist.<sup>5</sup> I suspect that the labelling of Foucault's work as positivism has to do with Habermas's inflexible and closed attitude towards the categorization of human sciences. In *Knowledge and Human*

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<sup>3</sup> In the 1986 meeting between the German and French philosophers, Derrida criticized Apel of contradicting his own ethic of communication. Derrida said that Apel never put himself into the place of the other. He had not come to learn the truth but to teach the truth. The meeting ended in a failure of these groups of philosophers to have a dialogue. See Rochlitz, 1986, p.124.

<sup>4</sup> Habermas (1987a:276) argues that Foucault's positivism, therefore, leads to an "Involuntary presentism of a historiography that remains hermeneutically stuck in its starting situation". See his criticism of Foucault's presentism in Habermas, 1987a, pp.276-8. For an elaboration of Foucault's presentism as a fruitful perspective, see Dean, 1994, Chapter 2.

<sup>5</sup> In a reply on behalf of Foucault to Habermas's critique, Rajchman (1988:178-9) points out that Foucault was playing on words and the term "positivism" that Foucault used should be understood as the positivity of a domain of knowledge.

*Interests*, Habermas classifies knowledge into three categories: first, the empirical-analytic sciences which are guided by the technical interest; second, the historical-hermeneutic sciences which are guided by the practical interest; and third, Critical Theory which is guided by the emancipatory interest. Habermas sees that the genealogist does not "try to make comprehensible what actors are doing and thinking out of the context of tradition interwoven with the self-understanding of the actors"; instead "there is only an analysis of structures that are meaningless in themselves" (Habermas, 1987a:277,275). This characteristic of genealogy distinguishes it from the historical-hermeneutic science. On the other hand, for Habermas, the genealogist sees that one power complex is dissolved and replaced by another, and human subjects are inescapably trapped into these complexes of power. Hence this genealogical perspective does not allow for what Critical Theory claims as an emancipatory interest. Seeing that Foucault's genealogy falls into neither the category of hermeneutics nor that of critical theory, Habermas believes that Foucault's work naturally falls into the first category, an empirical science characterized by positivism.

Foucault, however, states clearly that he never wants to establish genealogy in the form of a value-free positivism, nor does he aim at "getting a science underway that is superior to the mismanaged science". He claims that the intent of his project is "anti-sciences"; or, to be more exact, to attack the power effects associated with an organized scientific discourse within his society. Instead of getting a superior science underway, the objective of his project is to problematize this kind of intent.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Foucault states: "Genealogies are therefore not positivistic returns to a more careful or exact form of science. They are precisely anti-sciences. Not that they vindicate a lyrical right to ignorance or non-knowledge: it is not that they are concerned to deny knowledge or that they esteem the virtues of direct cognition and base their practice upon an immediate experience that escapes encapsulation in knowledge. It is not that with which we are concerned. We are concerned, rather, with the insurrection of subjugated knowledges that are opposed primarily not to the contents, methods or concepts of a science, but to the effects of the centralizing powers that are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse within a society such as ours" (Foucault, 1980c:83-4).

Habermas's holding on to his own schema and his lack of an open and flexible attitude lead to his misunderstanding of Foucault's intent and a false accusation of Foucault's positivism. Moreover, as he does not open himself to the voice of Foucault, he not only fails to see Foucault's genealogies as a form of knowledge that does not fit into his tripartite schema of knowledge, but also the challenge that this form of knowledge poses to his tripartite schema. He fails to realize that Foucault's genealogies expose the inadequacy of his framework of knowledge.

Foucault not only sees that different forms of knowledge are socially produced and that there is a nonreducible plurality of conceptual schemes, but he looks at knowledge from a particular perspective -- its relationship with discourse and power practices, or its role within a power complex. Habermas comments that this perspective not only deprives Foucault's work of any emancipatory power, but contains a kind of relativism. Foucault's relativism, for Habermas, not only refers to the view that the validity of knowledge is relative to the society or the age in which it is produced, but that the validity of knowledge is relative to the power complex to which it belongs. Habermas criticizes:

from this perspective, not only are truth claims confined to the discourses within which they arise; they exhaust their entire significance in the functional contribution they make to the self-maintenance of a given totality of discourse. That is to say, the meaning of validity claims consists in the power effects they have. (Habermas, 1987a:279)

Habermas contends that Foucault sees different forms of knowledge being no more and no less than the power effects they unleash, and this, he argues, results in two problems. Firstly, Foucault's theory cannot claim superiority as a truth claim. Its superiority can only be expressed in the effect of suppressing the hitherto dominant scientific discourse; it would exhaust itself in the politics of theory. Secondly, the subjugated knowledges that Foucault advocates cannot claim any superiority according to the standard of truth claims. These knowledges may conquer



the dominant discourses of today and overcome the current hierarchization of knowledge, but then they, in turn, would become another dominant discourse and establish a new hierarchy of knowledge (Habermas, 1987a:279-81).

Based on Habermas's critique, the problem of Foucault's relativism has little to do with its inability to distinguish the superiority of different forms of knowledge, but rather with its inability to distinguish different forms of knowledge according to the standard of truth. Foucault's approach does not imply that all knowledges are as good or as bad as the other, for they can be differentiated according to the specific relation they have with certain dominant forms of power. Knowledges which oppose certain dominant forms of power can be differentiated from those which closely ally with them. It is true for Habermas to say that Foucault's genealogical knowledges, as well as the knowledges he advocates, cannot claim superiority according to the standard of truth; nevertheless, they can seek to claim superiority on the basis of their effect in opposing certain dominant forms of power. Moreover, it is also true to say that after conquering the dominant discourse today, the subjugated knowledges may themselves become the theoretical avant-garde of tomorrow and themselves establish a new hierarchy of power, but this is where the attack applies again. Foucault's approach does not divide knowledges once and for all; nor would it give us comfort in any form of knowledge. Knowledges which are opposed to a certain dominant form of power may one day turn out to be the ones which produce domination effects. That is why the battle goes on; it never ends.

Therefore, Foucault's approach does have its own way of differentiating knowledges, that is, according to their specific role played in a certain power complex at a particular point of time. Foucault's way of differentiating knowledges is, of course, different from Habermas's way. Instead of acknowledging the difference and the right of the other's existence, Habermas's criticism is exclusively based on his own way of conceiving and differentiating knowledges.

Perhaps it is interesting to ask: why does not Foucault distinguish different forms of knowledge according to the standard of truth, as Habermas does? For Habermas, one of his enemies is relativism, and he is looking for the possibility of a theory to command universal consensus. He sees that only through the standard of truth can the validity of a theory transcend local agreements; only in this way can a project go beyond the status of a context-dependent practical enterprise. In contrast, as pointed out by Habermas, Foucault engages in a politics of theory. Foucault claims that he is not advancing a theory of power. Instead, he understands his work as "an analytics of power": a definition of the specific domains formed by relations of power (Foucault, 1979b:82). Hence different theories or forms of knowledge are identified as domains formed by relations of power. Foucault (1977:207-9) also sees his works as a "tool kit", without specifying how one may use it. Therefore, in terms of the nature of their projects, Habermas and Foucault are following different directions.

Far from being ignorant of the different nature of Foucault's project, there is a sense in which Habermas understands it quite well, as he calls Foucault's work "a politics of theory". Nevertheless, despite his knowledge of Foucault's project, Habermas still construes Foucault's work in terms of a *theory*, rather than a *politics of theory*. For instance, he says that "Foucault's *theory* would exhaust itself in the politics of theory" (Habermas, 1987a:279); his critique is titled as "Some questions concerning the *theory* of power: Foucault again". Having construed Foucault's work in terms of a theory, Habermas evaluates it according to his own conception of a theory, the validity of which is based upon the standard of truth. He does not allow Foucault's politics of theory to contribute to a new conception of theory; nor does he allow it to be evaluated according to its own standard.

Habermas's third criticism of Foucault reveals a similar phenomenon. Despite his knowledge of Foucault's intention and reasons for avoiding a normative basis, he criticizes Foucault's work in terms of a lack of a normative basis for the critique. Habermas says:

Foucault understands himself as a dissident who offers resistance to modern thought and humanistically disguised disciplinary power ... It is not Foucault's intention to continue that counterdiscourse which modernity has carried on with itself from its very beginning; he does not want to refine the language game of modern political theory (with its basic concepts like autonomy and heteronomy, morality and legality, emancipation and repression) and turn it against the pathologies of modernity -- he wants to undermine modernity and its language games. (Habermas, 1987a:282-3)

Hence, as understood by Habermas, Foucault avoids appealing to any humanist normative concepts in his critique, since this would merely strengthen a humanism which has become part of a normalizing form of violence.

Not only does Habermas understand Foucault's intention, he is also able to see Foucault's work as a tactic, as a tool. Habermas says that Foucault's work cannot be seen as critique, but as a tactic and tool for waging a battle against modernity and the humanistically disguised disciplinary power (Habermas, 1987a:283). Nevertheless, Habermas criticizes: "if it is just a matter of mobilizing counterpower, of strategic battles and wily confrontations, why should we muster any resistance at all against this all-pervasive power circulating in the bloodstream of the body of modern society, instead of just adapting ourselves to it? ... why fight at all?" He asserts that it is only with the introduction of some normative notions can Foucault begin to answer these questions (Habermas, 1987a:283-4).

The problem of Habermas's criticism, I contend, is not so much his begging the question "why fight?" as his identifying it with the question of the normative foundation of critique.<sup>7</sup> Habermas's project is preoccupied

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<sup>7</sup> Habermas considers Foucault's refusal to address the question "why fight?" as a failure to account for the *normative foundation* of his critique. Habermas says, "his putative objectivity of knowledge is itself put into question ... by the arbitrary partisanship of a criticism that cannot account for its normative foundations" (Habermas, 1987a:276). Also he



with the construction of the normative ground of critique. He assumes that a critique must contain a normative basis, and since Foucault's work does not seek to construct any kind of normative basis, it cannot be regarded as a critique.<sup>8</sup> Habermas's unwillingness to recognize Foucault's work as a kind of critique is again based on his own conception of critique. I would like to demonstrate that if Habermas had taken the character of Foucault's work more seriously, he should have changed his demand for a normative basis in Foucault's work, or at least raised the question "why fight?" in a more appropriate way.<sup>9</sup>

If we take the character of Foucault's work seriously, I suggest, the question "why fight?" should no longer be understood in terms of the normative basis of critique, but rather as part of a tactic to mobilize counterpower. With Habermas's approach of critique, one is concerned

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says: "Because Foucault cannot accept this notion from *Lebensphilosophie*, he has likewise to refrain from responding to the question about the normative foundations of his critique" (Habermas, 1987a:286).

<sup>8</sup> Dean (1994:119) argues that while Foucault employs the term 'critique' to describe his work, he "transforms the sense of the term from that of a legislating subject passing judgement on a deficient reality to an analysis of the assumptions on which taken-for-granted practices rest". Unlike Habermas's conception of critique, Foucault's critique does not appeal to any normative bases or universal grounds. Dean contends that it is time to drop both the term 'critique' and the perspective from which it derives. He suggests that we may use the term "criticism" to describe Foucault's analytic practice.

<sup>9</sup>For a typical criticism of Foucault in terms of the question "why fight", see Fraser's article, which has been used by Habermas, in which she asks: "Foucault calls in no uncertain terms for resistance to domination. But why? Why is struggle preferable to submission? Why ought domination to be resisted?" (Fraser, 1989:283). Also in another article, she says, "we may question, for example, whether Foucault's rhetoric really does the job of distinguishing better from worse regimes of social practices; whether it really does the job of identifying forms of domination (or whether it overlooks some and /or misrecognizes others); whether it really does the job of distinguishing fruitful from unfruitful, acceptable from unacceptable forms of resistance to domination; and finally whether it really does the job of suggesting not simply that change is possible but also what sort of change is desirable" (Fraser, 1985:173). Bernstein attempts a sympathetic reading of Foucault's work and considers the question of "why fight" more in Foucault's terms. He asks, Foucault is constantly tempting us with his references to the possibility of no longer being, doing, thinking what we are, do, think, but these references are in danger of becoming empty unless we have some sense of which possibilities and changes are desirable and why" (Bernstein, 1992:301). Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983:264), two generous interviewers of Foucault, comment that Foucault "owes us a criterion of what makes one kind of danger more dangerous than another".

about the construction of a principle or an ideal which would unambiguously regulate our action. Habermas's rational reconstruction of the universal pragmatics is an attempt to locate a principle that no rational being would dispute and an ideal in which human beings are free from domination. Foucault's project, in contrast, does not follow this approach of critique. In his view, those who find power intolerable may rise up and fight against it. One does not need the basis of an unassailable principle in order to act. This approach of course does not exclude the fact that Foucault may also need to give certain "justification" or reasons for a fight. Nevertheless, the "justification" or reasons given are not to be understood as a normative foundation, but rather part of a tactic to mobilize counterpower. For instance, in mobilizing attacks against what Habermas notices as the humanistically disguised disciplinary power, Foucault portrays a picture of a panopticon society so as to show us the danger of this power. The problems and dangers of disciplinary power that Foucault describes can be seen as certain justification or answer to the question "why fight?", but they are not to be understood as a foundation that grounds our action safely, and once and for all. In light of the specific character of Foucault's work, they are better understood as metaphor or strategy which aims at moving people to fight.

If one takes more seriously the specific character of Foucault's work, one may stop probing the question of "why fight?" and criticizing Foucault's genealogies in terms of their failure to answer normative questions. For Foucault's genealogies do not need to address normative questions in order to function as a tactic of mobilizing counterpower. Instead they function as a tactic by opening up a distance between us and the familiar phenomena, producing discord and unsettling effects, so as to make us more ready for alternatives. Furthermore, if one takes Foucault's work as tactic which mobilizes counterpower, the question of why fight

would not be the only or major concern. For instance, one may probe other questions, or be concerned with "where and how to attack".<sup>10</sup>

In sum, Habermas's criticisms of Foucault's positivism, relativism and cryptonormativism reveal his unwillingness to consider and evaluate Foucault's work on its own terms. Hence not only does he fail to appreciate any of the insights of Foucault's work, he is also unable to see the challenge that Foucault may have for his own work, including the challenge to his tripartite schema of knowledge, his conception of theory, and his understanding of critique.

## II

Habermas's project represents one of the most prominent approaches to critique of power. I acknowledge Habermas's effort in developing a communicative ethics which may help in settling disputes of theoretical and normative claims and in providing an ideal of rational consensus so that one may question every power relation in terms of its nonconsensuality.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, while recognizing the contributions of Habermas's project, I maintain that one should reflect upon the limits and inadequacies of it. In this thesis, I am going to examine "Foucault's Challenge to Habermas's Critique of Power". Nevertheless, it does not aim so much to be a negation of Habermas's project as an analysis and reflection upon its limitations.

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<sup>10</sup> Foucault (1986b:343-4) mentions the problems of the mental hospital. He (1977:211) also discusses the problems of the excess of power in prison. However, he does not provide a further elaboration on them as specific sites of struggle and on where and how to attack.

<sup>11</sup> When asked about his view toward Habermas's notion of rational consensus, Foucault (1986d:379) points out that "it is perhaps a critical idea to maintain at all times: to ask oneself what proportion of nonconsensuality is implied in such a power relation, and whether that degree of nonconsensuality is necessary or not, then one may question every power relation to that extent."



To examine Foucault's challenges to Habermas implies a recast of the debate between Habermas and Foucault. I think that there are several reasons for the Habermas/Foucault debate to be recast in this way. Firstly, as noted by Kelly,<sup>12</sup> insofar as the debate did take place, the amount of discussion by each philosopher about the other was unintentionally lopsided in Habermas's favour. Habermas devoted two chapters of *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* to criticizing Foucault, but as the book was published after Foucault's death, it received no reply. Therefore, I see my thesis as an attempt to provide a reply on Foucault's behalf to Habermas's criticism. Secondly, Habermas's critique of Foucault is directed at his writings up through the late 1970s, which focus on notions of power/knowledge and disciplinary-normalizing power. My thesis will mainly make use of this period's writings of Foucault so as to provide a parallel response to Habermas's critique.

Lastly, more importantly, insofar as the debate has taken place, it is often construed in Habermas's terms. Foucault's work is criticized in terms of its inadequacies in offering a comprehensive framework of critical inquiry or its failure to provide a basis or normative yardstick for critique. As discussed above, despite Foucault's own intention in the discussion of an aesthetics of existence, it is read and criticized in terms of its inadequacies for being a normative basis for critique. Little attention is given to whether we must have a normative basis in order to practise critique, and to whether Foucault's work provides us with an alternative understanding to critique. Moreover, there is little discussion as to what kinds of challenge Foucault's work poses to Habermas, and how Habermas's project may need to be altered in light of Foucault's work.

In considering Foucault's challenge to Habermas, however, one must avoid being a polemicist. As discussed by Foucault (1986c:382), a polemicist confronts the other as an adversary, an enemy who is wrong, who is harmful, and whose very existence constitutes a threat. For a polemicist,

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<sup>12</sup> Kelly (1994:4-5) has provided six overlapping reasons for the debate to be recast. My reasons have certain similarity with some of those given by him.

<sup>12.5</sup> One must notice that there are changes in Foucault's conceptions of power after mid-1970s, particularly those involved with his notion of governmentality. This notion of governmentality not only indicates Foucault's leaving behind the concept of power-as-domination that burdened his earlier discussions of power, but also allows Foucault to discuss discipline as one of the specific rationalities of government. Moreover, its emphasis on treating questions of the state and its activities in the context of specific rationalities of government could imply further challenges to Habermas's work on power and the state. See Hindess (1996) for a discussion of these challenges. My thesis is, however, not going to have a detailed discussion of the notion of governmentality, but would rather confine itself mainly to a discussion of Foucault's notions of power/knowledge and disciplinary power that have been taken up by Habermas.

the game does not consist of recognizing the other person as a subject having the right to speak, but of eliminating him from any possible dialogue. The aim is to defeat the enemy. In claiming that Foucault poses certain kinds of challenge to Habermas, I do not aim at a defeat of Habermas or an assertion of the overall superiority of Foucault, for Foucault's work also has its own problems and limitations. In addition, Foucault himself has expressed his admiration toward Critical Theory, and acknowledges the problem they have in common -- the history of reason.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, although Foucault avoids appealing to any normative notions, it cannot be denied that there are values presupposed by his project, and he also shares some of the values of Habermas. For instance, in an interview, Foucault (1986d:379) asserts that one must be against nonconsensuality, though one may not be for consensuality. He suggests that one should ask what proportion of nonconsensuality is implied in a power relation, and whether that degree of nonconsensuality is necessary or not. Hence, Habermas's notion of free communication is viewed by Foucault as a critical principle that one may use to question power relations. Moreover, Foucault (1986f:46) claims that his project is "to give impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of *freedom*". His emphasis on the value of freedom is certainly a belief which he shares with Habermas.

Perhaps, as Taylor notices, the value of freedom, and maybe truth too, must be presupposed by any critique of power.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>13</sup> In an interview, Foucault (1983:200-1) says that if he had been aware of the critical inquiries done by the Frankfurt School, he would have avoided some of the stupid remarks he made. He sees that they have a problem in common--the history of reason--but they approach it in different ways. He says, "I would not speak about one bifurcation of reason but more about an endless, multiple bifurcation -- a kind of abundant ramification".

<sup>14</sup> Taylor (1986), as Habermas does, tends to probe the foundation of Foucault's critique. He charges Foucault's position as incoherent since he refuses to appeal to notions of freedom and truth which must be presupposed in Foucault's critique of power. For a reply to Taylor on behalf of Foucault, see Patton, 1989; Connolly, 1985. Also see Patton, 1994 pp.68ff; for a discussion of how Foucault's appeal to human freedom needs not be read as contradictory to his anti-humanist stance.

acknowledging that Foucault holds certain values is one thing; it is another to assume that he must construct a theory of these values in order to practise critique. While acknowledging that Foucault's critique presupposes certain values, in contrast to Taylor's view, I argue that one does not need to construct a notion of freedom or truth as the foundation in order to practise critique. This is exactly the novelty of Foucault's work. He shows us the possibility of practising critique without appealing to or constructing certain notions of freedom and truth. Furthermore, what Foucault tries to show is that these notions and discourses of freedom and truth are not as innocent and transparent as always assumed. They are often involved in the process in which power effects are produced and maintained.

When the debate is construed in Habermasian terms, Foucault's refusal to address normative questions is often seen as the major weakness of his work. However, when the debate is recast in Foucault's terms, we are able to see the advantages of his suspension of the normative questions. They include, firstly, showing us an alternative to Habermas's approach of critique which is preoccupied with the question of the ground of critique, and secondly, allowing us to see more clearly how effects of power are produced and maintained. My thesis is an attempt to bring to light these strengths of Foucault's project.

Habermas's project is preoccupied with the task of developing a yardstick so as to distinguish legitimate and illegitimate power. He constructs a notion of communicative action in order to provide the yardstick for critique. Power which is based on rational consensus arrived at in communicative action is considered as legitimate. Habermas's approach, I argue, can be considered as what Foucault calls "a juridico-discursive model of power". I shall discuss at length what Foucault means by "a juridico-discursive model of power" in Chapter 3, and here I briefly mention two of its characteristics. Firstly, a juridico-discursive mode of analysis represents power as operating like a law which prohibits and says "no". As power is represented as negative, it has to submit to the rule of



right. Hence, secondly, the juridico-discursive mode of analysis represents power as submitting to the rule of right. When power is exercised within limits and operates in accordance with the principle of legitimation, it is seen as lawful and legitimate; illegitimate power is one which transgresses its limits and violates the principle of legitimation. With a juridico-discursive model of power, one is preoccupied with defining the limit or right of power, or as what Habermas does, drawing the line between legitimate and illegitimate power.

Foucault's approach not only questions this juridico-discursive model of power, but also provides an alternative to it. Foucault claims that the existence of power is not ensured by rights, but rather by techniques. In order to understand the concrete functioning of power, he argues, one has to look into the techniques of power rather than becoming preoccupied with the construction of normative principles. Foucault proposes a strategic model that emphasizes an examination of the totality of means by which power effects are produced and maintained.

With a strategic model, one asks: by what means is power exercised? and by what means is power implemented effectively? In contrast to the juridico-discursive mode of analysis which represents power as one which negates and says "no", the strategic model discovers that in order for power to be implemented effectively, power must be productive. It produces utility; it produces knowledges; it produces identities and subjectivities. What Foucault shows is that there is a complex interplay between power and all these structures which were previously assumed to be devoid of power. Nevertheless, one should not conclude that these structures of knowledges, identities and subjectivities are bad because they are the instruments of power. Foucault does not mean then that everything is bad, but rather that everything is dangerous. This raises our awareness of the danger of structures of knowledges and subjectivities that might be drawn into the deployment of power. It also exposes the misguided comfort that Habermas's project tends to provide.

If power is productive, that is, if the exercise of power is linked to the production of utility, for example, criticism of power is not aimed at a rejection or negation. Instead, it is meant to problematize what is taken for granted, to inject anxiety and uncertainty, to raise our awareness of the danger. In this sense, Foucault provides us not only a new approach to critique, that is, to replace the juridico-discursive model with the strategic model, but also a new interpretation of the meaning of criticism. Criticism is not equivalent to rejection. Criticism consists of analyzing and reflecting upon limits. The philosophical ethos, as Foucault (1986f:45) says, is characterized by a limit-attitude, that one constantly analyzes and reflects upon the limits of one's thinking. Perhaps this insight can also be applied to the examination of Habermas's work in my thesis.

In examining Foucault's challenge to Habermas, the purpose is to criticize Habermas's project. The criticism, however, is not as much a rejection as a reflection upon the limits of Habermas's project. In order to reflect upon the limits and the conditions of Habermas's way of thinking, this thesis starts with an analysis of the problematics and preoccupations of Habermas's project. The aim is to show that these problematics and preoccupations lead Habermas's project to take certain steps instead of others, and enable him to emphasize certain notions instead of others. This analysis of the preoccupations of Habermas's project is meant to provide a background for us to understand not only his critique of power, but also its limits.

### III

This thesis is divided into two parts: one deals with Habermas's critique of power; the other with Foucault's challenge to Habermas's theory. The first part consists of two chapters. Chapter 1 examines the problematics and preoccupations of Habermas's project. As discussed

above, Habermas's criticisms of Foucault are exclusively based on his own perspective of critique. This chapter introduces the perspective that Habermas adopts, that is, one which sees that a critique must be grounded in reason. It points out that from the beginning his project has been guided by the problematic of the ground of critique. For he sees the problem of earlier critical theory in terms of a totalizing critique; that is, it turns against reason and hence deprives itself of the ground of critique. He intends to correct the mistake that earlier critical theory has made. He maintains that critique has to be grounded in reason in order for its claim to transcend the local contexts and obtain the status of universal truth. He believes that only in this way can truth be differentiated from falsehood and ideology.

Habermas's effort to construct the basis of critique can be seen in terms of two stages. In an early stage, Habermas develops a theory of knowledge not only to clarify the cognitive status of different forms of knowledge but also to ground critical theory in one of the fundamental characteristics of human existence. He argues that critical theory is constituted by an emancipatory interest which frees consciousness from its dependence on hypostatized powers. In a later stage, Habermas turns to a rational construction of the pragmatic universals of speech acts so as to demonstrate that there is an internal relation between reason and communication and that this notion of reason can be reconstructed as the ground of critique.

Chapter 2 discusses more specifically how Habermas uses his notion of communicative action to provide a yardstick for the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power. He considers power which is based on rational consensus arrived at in communicative action to be legitimate. With this communicative concept of (legitimate) power, Habermas believes that power can be disconnected from force and that the possibility of force is excluded from legitimate power. I argue that Habermas's communicative concept of power is not able to resolve the problem of coercion he perceives in relations of force. This chapter also discusses how



Habermas builds on a notion of lifeworld to analyze the problem of power and pathologies in modern societies. It examines Habermas's notion of lifeworld, which idealizes lifeworld as the background of communicative action and assumes it to be inherently unproblematic. I would like to show that with this idealized notion of lifeworld, Habermas sees the causes of modern pathologies as lying elsewhere, and he produces a myth that lifeworld is inherently unproblematic.

After a critical examination of Habermas's analysis of power, I discuss the kinds of challenge that Foucault's work poses to Habermas's theory in Part II. The first kind of challenge to consider comes from Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power. Habermas's critique of Foucault in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* focuses a great deal on Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power, but Habermas never sees the challenge it may have for his own work. In Chapter 3, I argue that the challenge comes from, firstly, the concept of disciplinary power as a particular form of power that Habermas's framework would have difficulty in dealing with, and secondly, the strategic model associated with Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power. Habermas's communicative concept of power presupposes a binary opposition between power and force, between internal enforcement and external enforcement. Foucault's disciplinary power, which may work through a subtle coercion of our body, can be considered as a particular form of power which subverts these binary oppositions. Moreover, for Habermas, there is a binary opposition between, on the one hand, a positive power which is enabling, noncoercive and based on a collective will, and on the other hand, a negative power which is constraining, coercive, and oriented toward particular interests. Disciplinary power, in contrast, is a form of power which coerces but at the same time enables. The coercive side of disciplinary power is always connected with the productive side.

I suggest that what is more significant is Foucault's strategic model of analysis behind his notion of disciplinary power. This strategic model of analysis, I argue, poses challenges to Habermas's juridico-discursive mode

of analysis of power. Habermas's analysis of power, as discussed above, demonstrates some of the characteristics of a juridico-discursive mode of analysis. Firstly, concerned with the asymmetrical character of power, Habermas asks how to submit power to the rule of right. Secondly, for Habermas, power flows from the centre, the sovereign, and permeates to the base. Foucault's strategic model, which looks into the means by which power effects are produced and maintained, challenges these premises of Habermas's analysis of power. Not only are some of Habermas's conclusions about the power and pathologies in modern societies questioned, but his mode of analysis which is preoccupied with the distinction of legitimate and illegitimate power is challenged.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the challenge of Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge to Habermas's theory. I suggest that Habermas's study of knowledge in *Knowledge and Human Interests* can be considered as a juridico-discursive mode of analysis. The juridico-discursive mode of analysis represents power as submitting to the rule of right. It views power as legitimate when it is exercised within its limits. For Habermas, science, and other forms of knowledge too, submit to the rule of right. They are seen as unproblematic as long as they are confined to their own domain. From the perspective of Foucault's strategic model, however, certain knowledges are problematic not when they transgress the boundary of their own domain, but when they provide the means by which power is exercised. Moreover, I argue, the way in which they provide a means for the exercise of power is different from what Habermas assumes. They do not lend themselves to power as a victim that falls a prey to power, but rather form the internal condition by which power is exercised. In contrast to what Habermas sees as an external relation between knowledge and power, Foucault shows that there is an internal relation between these knowledges and power.

Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge, I contend, poses another challenge to Habermas with regard to his representation of truth in the model of rational discourse. With the notion of an ideal speech situation

presupposed in Habermas's discourse model, the production of truth is represented as free from power. Foucault challenges it by showing that power relations constitute the condition for the development of certain true knowledges, that is, power produces truths. If truths are shown to be part of the problem, we can no longer imagine that "truth will make us free". What shall we do with truth? The last part of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of these issues.

Habermas claims that his project has moved away from the philosophy of the subject. In Chapter 5, I point out that his notion of communicative action still relies upon an a priori notion of the rational subject who possesses certain linguistic competences. Not only is his claim of moving away from the philosophy of the subject doubtful, but his reliance upon a certain notion of modern subjectivity allows Foucault to say something about his project. I would like to argue that there are two kinds of challenge that Foucault has for Habermas: one makes use of Foucault's notion of otherness to criticize Habermas; the other considers Habermas's weakness from the perspective of Foucault's strategic model. In terms of Foucault's notion of otherness, Habermas can be criticized for his exclusion of those who fall behind his standard of rationality as the other. "The other" include those who want to remain privatistic about their feelings and are unwilling to prove their claims, and those who lack argumentative capability.

Nevertheless, this way of drawing insights from Foucault, I argue, presupposes a negative concept of power that Foucault seeks to surpass. From his strategic model, one sees that in order for power to be implemented effectively, power cannot merely negate ; instead, it must be productive: power produces subjectivities. Therefore, the problem of Habermas's theory, I suggest, is not so much his exclusion of the other as his production of modern rational subjectivity, for it is through the production of modern subjectivities that modern forms of power begin to operate. In his latest works, Foucault's discussion of the Greek ethics presupposes a notion of an aesthetic subject. Is it, as Foucault's critics



understand, a basis to ground critique? If the answer is no, in what way does it help us reflect upon resistance against modern power? The last part of chapter 5 will seek to answer these questions.

The other kind of challenge to be discussed relates to Foucault's idea of Enlightenment, which is also a central theme of the debate between Habermas and Foucault. In Habermas's view, Foucault is pessimistic and one-sided as he leaves out the bright side of the Enlightenment which includes the development of universalistic morality and systems of right. I argue that their difference should not be construed in terms of pessimism and optimism, or as one holding a one-sided view while the other holds a more balanced view. For Foucault is, like Habermas, able to see both the achievements and the evils of the Enlightenment. Foucault says that the Enlightenment has discovered liberties, but at the same time it has also invented the disciplines. In drawing our attention to the disciplines invented by the Enlightenment, Foucault does not mean to condemn the achievements of the Enlightenment as evil. What he wants to show is that if there are any achievements of the Enlightenment, they should not be viewed as pure and absolute, but rather as ambiguous. For it is the development of the disciplines which constitutes the other side of the process. The problem of Habermas is his squeezing the ambiguity out of these Enlightenment achievements and seeking to assert them as the elements of reason that provide us the basis of hope.

In the second part of Chapter 6, I shall examine Foucault's essays on "What is Enlightenment?" and see whether, as Habermas's says, it reveals a contradiction with his earlier work. Habermas thinks that there is no way to reconcile the position announced in "What is Enlightenment?" with that of Foucault's earlier work. I argue that Foucault provides an example of how to subvert the "blackmail" of the Enlightenment. His position in the earlier work should not be read as an anti-Enlightenment stance, nor should his latest essays on "What is Enlightenment?" be read as pro-Enlightenment. Foucault's contribution lies particularly in his challenging these binary oppositions and "simplistic and authoritarian

alternatives". His use of reason, as discussed in the essay "What is Enlightenment?", is not one that draws limits and boundaries or that constructs binary oppositions, but rather one which respects the complexities of reality while experimenting with how to transgress it.

In Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, I summarize the insights of Foucault's work and its challenges for Habermas's theory. I point out that from Habermas's perspective, there could be four kinds of weakness in Foucault's work; but if we look at things from the perspective of Foucault, all of them would fall into place. In Habermas's view, firstly, Foucault fails to provide a principle according to which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power; secondly, Foucault's knowledges fail to claim superiority according to the standard of truth; thirdly, Foucault adopts an anti-Enlightenment stance and fails to affirm the achievements of the Enlightenment; fourthly, Foucault's normative positions fail to claim superiority according to the standard of universal validity claims. However, from Foucault's perspective, we see that firstly, the preoccupation with a differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate power belongs to a juridico-discursive model of power which Foucault seeks to surpass. He introduces us to a strategic model of power which focuses not so much on the questions of right and legitimacy, but rather on the techniques and mechanisms by which power effects are produced. In this way we see that truth is the means through which power operates. Therefore, secondly, instead of appealing to the notion of truth as the ground of critique, Foucault seeks to problematize the status of truth. Foucault challenges Habermas by showing that the problem is no longer falsehood and ideology, but truth. Thirdly, from the perspective of a strategic model, we see that achievements of the Enlightenment are so much "entangled" with "evils" that they could no longer be considered as pure achievements. Foucault is opposed to the simplistic alternative of pro-Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment that Habermas has in mind, and he engages in a permanent critique of the historical era of the Enlightenment which is an attempt to break free from this "blackmail" of the Enlightenment.

Lastly, we are left with Habermas's criticism of Foucault's lack of a normative ground, and the second part of Chapter 7 will deal with this issue. I argue that Foucault's critique should be seen as an alternative to Habermas's normative approach of critique. It does not provide any normative principle that enables one to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power or that commands universal consensus. Instead of worrying about the possibility of coming to a rational agreement, Foucault's critique is a case of injecting anxiety and uncertainty into forms of action and thought. It questions what we have taken for granted; it questions the principles which we often rely on. The questioning is, however, not carried out by providing answers to normative questions, but by opening a distance between us and the familiar phenomena, producing discord and unsettling effects. While refusing to provide normative principles, it is capable of moving people to fight, for it shows the intensification and excess of power in modern western societies and the danger of modern forms of power.

I acknowledge that Foucault's suspension of the normative question would create difficulties since we would not be able to have a principle according to which we can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power, acceptable and unacceptable resistance, desirable and undesirable changes. Nevertheless, Foucault's approach implies a determination to leave the questions to the reflection and decision of individuals. The difficulties created by Foucault are perhaps the difficulty of theoreticians to limit their role to a critical-historical analysis as well as the difficulty of individuals to be mature and able to reflect and make decision for themselves.

I conclude that one must notice the limitation of Foucault's work. That is, he shows us what he perceives to be the current problem, the main danger of modern western societies. Nevertheless, other people, Habermas, for instance, could perceive a different kind of danger. If Habermas's ideal cannot provide a safeguard against the danger of a fully panopticized society, Foucault's work is also unable to provide a safeguard against the danger of a form of life in which people no longer demand



rational, normative legitimation of social authority, but just cynically go along out of privatized strategic considerations. I think what we obtain from Foucault is not a set of doctrines, but rather a certain way of philosophizing and a certain awareness of the danger of modern western societies. Each of us must make an ethico-political choice every day to determine what is the main danger.

Habermas sees his project as both a continuation and a critical evaluation of earlier critical theory (which primarily means the works of the Frankfurt School). On the one hand, Habermas agrees with earlier critical theory's attempt to shift from the critique of the political economy to the critique of the socio-cultural sphere. That is, the problem of power and domination in late capitalist societies is no longer mainly to do with inequalities and exploitation in the production sphere. Instead, power, in the name of rationality, extends itself to the socio-cultural sphere to instrumentalize our action orientation. The critique of the instrumental rationality becomes the major task of critical theory. On the other hand, Habermas considers the major weakness of earlier critical theory as lying in its confusion of reason with this instrumental form of rationality. In his view, earlier critical theory adopts a totalist critique of Western reason, and hence turns its back on the very foundation of critique. In other words, for Habermas, the basis of critical theory is undermined by the line that the Frankfurt School pursues.

Therefore, from the beginning Habermas has been preoccupied with two tasks: firstly, searching for the ground of critique, and secondly, providing a critique of power and ideology in modern societies. Before discussing Habermas's analyses of power and pathologies in modern societies, as I shall do in Chapter 2, this chapter introduces the development of Habermas's theoretical framework in terms of an attempt to accomplish the first task. In particular, his efforts in developing a theory of knowledge and a theory of communicative action are considered as attempts to provide a ground of critique.

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part I presents Habermas's diagnosis of the problems of earlier critical theory. While locating his project

# Chapter 1

## HABERMAS'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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in the tradition that runs from Marx to the Frankfurt School, Habermas sees both the collapse of faith in Marx's theory and the shift of the Frankfurt School to a totalizing critique of reason as undermining the basis of critical theory. Hence he is concerned with developing a theoretical framework so that critical theory can be grounded in an affirmative way. Part II discusses Habermas's theory of knowledge as a preliminary attempt to solve what he perceives as the problems of earlier critical theory. In his work *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas not only clarifies the cognitive status of different forms of knowledge, but also provides a ground for critical theory in one of the fundamental characteristics of human existence -- power. He argues that critical theory is guided by an emancipatory interest which aims to free consciousness from its dependence on hypostatized powers. This emancipatory interest, he claims, is the interest of reason. In his later works, he seeks to construct more clearly a notion of reason so as to provide a ground for critique. Part III discusses Habermas's theory of communicative action as his attempt to demonstrate an internal relation between reason and communication. In order to accomplish this task, firstly, he tries to demonstrate communicative action as the original mode of language use; secondly, he carries out a rational reconstruction of the universal conditions of the possibility of understanding; and thirdly, he sets up a model of rational discourse.

Besides an explication of Habermas's theoretical framework, this chapter seeks to show that Habermas's preoccupation with certain problematics leads him to take some steps instead of others, and enables him to emphasize some concepts instead of others. The analysis of the preoccupations of Habermas's project is intended to be a reflection upon the limits of Habermas's theory.



## 1.1 Habermas and Earlier Critical Theory

Habermas constantly situates his project within the tradition of Marx and the Frankfurt School (here I shall primarily consider Marcuse, Horkheimer and Adorno). He shares with them the problematic of the critique of power and ideology. In an article titled *Science and Technology as "Ideology"*, Habermas (1989) identifies his project as a continuation of Marcuse's critique of science and technology as ideology. However, from Marcuse's discussion, Habermas sees the problem of Marx's theory: contrary to Marx's understanding, the forces of production do not contradict relations of production. Instead, with the advance of science and technology, the productive forces become the basis which legitimates relations of production. Marx's theory, which once provided critical theory with the basis of critique, is increasingly put into question. In Habermas's view, one should construct an alternative basis for critique. To his disappointment, Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of Enlightenment does not pursue this direction. For him, critique becomes totalizing and is headed toward a dead end. In this section, I shall look into Habermas's diagnosis of the problems of earlier critical theory so as to understand the preoccupations of Habermas's project.

Habermas (1989) takes up Marcuse's discussion of science and technology, and writes: Marcuse points out that science and technology represent a kind of instrumental-purposive rationality that results not only in domination of nature but domination of men. Men as well as nature are subjected to the scientific, calculated control made possible by the principles and techniques of science and technology. Marcuse says,

not only the application of technology but technology itself is domination (of nature and men) -- methodical, scientific, calculated, calculating control. Specific purposes and interests of domination are not foisted upon technology "subsequently" and from the outside; they enter the very construction of the technical apparatus. (Habermas, 1989:238)

While men are increasingly subjected to the calculated control of bureaucratic regulation and government surveillance, nevertheless, they are unable to recognize this kind of domination. For science and technology function as an ideology which conceals domination and repression. Marcuse argues, as summarized by Habermas, that objectively superfluous repression exists in the form of an intensified subjection of individuals to the enormous apparatus of production and distribution, and a deprivation of free time, yet this repression is not recognized by people because the legitimation of domination has assumed a new character: it refers to the constantly increasing productivity following from scientific and technical progress that keeps individuals living in increasing comfort (Habermas, 1989:238). In other words, the ideology of science and technology, which promises material comfort, prevents people from being aware of their own situation, their situation of being dominated and repressed.

For Habermas, Marcuse's critique of science and technology can be seen as a challenge to Marx's theory. Marx claims that the productive forces unleashed by capitalism would provide an objective condition for overcoming it. He assumes that there would be contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, and finally revolutionary action would take place. Marcuse, however, is able to see that at the stage of scientific-technical development, the forces of production enter into a new constellation with the relations of production. The continual growth of productive forces is now dependent on scientific-technical progress that has been serving the function of legitimating political power. Therefore, Habermas states, instead of being the basis of critique in the interest of political emancipation, the forces of production become the basis of legitimating domination (Habermas, 1989:239).

In addition to the critique of productive forces, there are other socio-historical factors which lead to the collapse of the faith in Marx's theory. Habermas (1973:195-8) summarizes the changing socio-historical scene in terms of four historical facts. First, in the stage of organized capitalism the sphere of commodity exchange and social labor requires centralized

organization or state administration. The traditional base-superstructure model no longer applies as politics is no less dependent on the economic sphere than the economic sphere is dependent on politics. Second, in advanced capitalism the standard of living has risen to an extent that "alienation" is no longer expressed as economic misery. It may find its remote reflection in a poverty of leisure, an externally manipulated motivation, and a satisfaction of false needs. Third, under these conditions, the avant-garde of the socialist revolution, the proletariat class, has been dissolved. Fourth, the Russian Revolution did not bring about a truly emancipated society. It established a rule of functionaries and Party cadres which enforced control over broad social domains.

What is worth noticing is the impact of the collapse of faith in Marx's theory on earlier critical theory. Habermas (1982b:21) states its impact in this way: "the critique of ideology has lost its foundations. Moreover, if the forces of production are increasingly merging symbiotically with the relations of production which they at one time were supposed to destroy, then there is also no more driving force on which critique could set its hopes". Since earlier critical theory had relied upon Marx's theory to provide the foundation of critique, the collapse of faith in that theory is believed to have a disturbing effect on earlier critical theory. In order to see this impact, we should first of all understand the relation between earlier critical theory and Marx's theory.

Roderick(1986:32-41) provides a concise account of the way in which earlier critical theory based itself upon Marx's theory.<sup>1</sup> In the 1930s, he writes, the critical theorists still adopted an affirmative attitude toward the possibility of emancipation. In their critique of ideology, Horkheimer and Adorno adopted the method of "immanent critique", which was supported by Marx's theory of history. By "immanent critique", Roderick says, critical theory is to confront "the existent, in its historical context with the claim of its conceptual principles, in order to criticize the relationship between the two and thus transcend them" (Roderick, 1986:37; Horkheimer, 1974:182). By locating the

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<sup>1</sup> Also see Habermas, 1982a, p.231; for his own view on how immanent critique depends upon a theory of history.



contradiction between bourgeois ideals, like justice, equality and freedom, and social reality, they seek to expose the irrationality of capitalism. According to Roderick, Horkheimer still looked to the proletariat class as the addressees of critical theory. It was hoped that through raising the consciousness of the proletariat, the critique would create the subjective condition, and when the subjective condition converges with the objective condition, the proletariat would be able to bear its historical role (Roderick, 1986:37-8).

Therefore, Roderick elaborates, the critical theory advocated by Horkheimer was dependent upon Marx's theory of historical materialism to provide the ground; otherwise the method of immanent critique can have relativistic implications. For it could only appeal to truths or values which are internal to a particular society in a particular historical period, and one could question the validity of using these concepts as the standards of critique. With the help of a theory of history, however, it is able to avoid this kind of relativism. For Marx's theory of historical materialism provides a picture of the progression of humankind's history which tells what people are and what they could become. Hence according to Marx's theory, the potential of the concepts of critique is supported by the objective historical development (Roderick, 1986:39-42).

By the 1940s, Roderick says, this formulation of critical theory, which depended upon Marx's theory to provide the ground, was abandoned. As mentioned before, the changing historical scenes posed a challenge to Marx's theory. In particular, experiences like Russian Stalinism, the rise of Fascism, the failure of the social-revolutionary labor movement in all industrial societies, and the post-war stabilization of capitalism all resulted in the disappointment of revolutionary expectations (Roderick, 1986:38; Habermas, 1991:366-7). Earlier critical theory could no longer look upon the proletariat as the subject of history. In Habermas's view, it is necessary to reconstruct the basis for critical theory. Yet, to his disappointment, earlier critical theory has not pursued this end. Instead of searching for an alternative foundation, critique becomes totalizing.

For Habermas, Adorno's diagnosis of the "totally-administered society" and Marcuse's thesis of "one-dimensional man" are too pessimistic since they portray a picture of complete loss of freedom and autonomy in late-capitalist societies. Likewise, for Habermas, the criticism of Enlightenment provided by Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is one-sided. Habermas thinks that the path they take has led critical theory to a dead end. In an article titled "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment", Habermas (1982b) elaborates his criticisms of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as follows: firstly, Horkheimer and Adorno overlook the achievements of the Enlightenment and merely conduct a negative critique; secondly, they turn against reason and thus deprive themselves of any ground for critique.

Habermas writes that in contrast to our understanding that enlightenment represents a liberating force vis-a-vis myth and the authority of tradition, Horkheimer and Adorno propose that "myth is already enlightenment; and enlightenment reverts to mythology" (Habermas, 1982b:14). In the view of Horkheimer and Adorno, Habermas elaborates, people develop their identity by learning to control external nature at the price of repressing their inner nature. Hence the ego which originally outsmarted its mythical fate by sacrificing a substitute is again overwhelmed by this mythical fate as soon as it is forced to internalize this self-sacrifice (Habermas, 1982b:16). For Horkheimer and Adorno, Habermas writes, Enlightenment is not only marked by the domination of an objectified external nature, but also a repressed inner nature.

Habermas does not deny that Enlightenment brings about the domination of an objectified external nature and a repressed inner nature. What he wants to point out is that this is only one side of the Enlightenment. Habermas believes that in the spheres of science, morality and art, Enlightenment has brought about gains in freedom and autonomy. He argues that certain elements of cultural modernity, like the self-reflexion of science that allows it to have the status of theoretical knowledge, the universalist foundations of law and morality that have been embodied in democratic institutions, and the liberating force of an aesthetic experience that is contained in the work of

avant-garde art and the discourses of art criticism, should be affirmed (Habermas, 1982b:18). Yet, for Horkheimer and Adorno the spheres of science, morality and art do not offer any hope. Habermas summarizes: they are convinced that science has been absorbed by instrumental reason and becomes merely a technologically exploitable knowledge. They also believe that with the disintegration of religious and metaphysical world views, all moral standards lose their credibility in face of the sole authority of science. In their analysis of mass culture, Adorno and Horkheimer show that art is drained of its innovative and critical power when fused with entertainment (Habermas, 1982b:17).

In Habermas's view, the one-sidedness of Horkheimer and Adorno's critique is based on their thesis that "the process of enlightenment is from the very beginning dependent on an impulse of self-preservation which mutilates reason because it can only make use of it in the form of purposive-rational domination of nature and instinct" (Habermas, 1982b:17). This thesis, Habermas contends, leads to two problems. First, it turns against reason which is for Habermas the very foundation of critique. Second, it assumes that reason only serves the impulse of self-preservation, and hence reason is stripped of its validity claims and assimilated to sheer power.

According to Habermas, when critique becomes totalizing, it poses serious problems for critical theory in terms of its ground of critique. In his words:

Critique becomes total: it turns against reason as the foundation of its own analysis. The fact that the suspicion of ideology becomes total means that it opposes not only the ideological function of the bourgeois ideals, but rationality as such, thereby extending critique to the very foundations of an immanent critique of ideology. (Habermas, 1982b:22)

In order to ground critique, Habermas thinks that we must retain a certain notion of reason. This notion of reason must be able to differentiate reason from a purposive-instrumental form of rationality. For Habermas, since Horkheimer and Adorno do not have such a notion of reason, what they see is



reason subjected to the dictates of purposive rationality, even in the spheres of modern science, morality and art, whereas in Habermas's eyes, it is a mistake to collapse the reason in science, morality and art into an instrumental reason.

Habermas contends that because Horkheimer and Adorno see reason regress to a form of rationality at the service of self-preservation, hence behind the ideals of objectivity and the truth claims of science, behind the normative claims of Christianity and a universalist morality, they find nothing but the imperatives of self-preservation and domination (1982b:24). Habermas thinks that this is unacceptable since they overlook the validity claims behind theoretical and practical reason, and they simply reduce validity claims into power claims. Habermas argues that if "all proper claims to validity are devalued and if the underlying value-judgements are mere expressions of claims to power rather than to validity, according to what standards should critique then differentiate? It must at least be able to discriminate between a power which deserves to be esteemed and a power which deserves to be disparaged". Without the standard of validity claims, "there are only struggles between power and nothing is left to transcend the struggles" (Habermas, 1982b:27). Therefore, Habermas states, reason cannot be reduced to the power of self-preservation; validity claims cannot be reduced to power claims.

To close our discussion of Habermas's criticism of earlier critical theory, it has to be pointed out that Habermas does not only think critique has to be grounded, but that critique has to be grounded in reason. When we talk about the ground of a critique, we mean the critique must be justified, or supported by arguments and evidence. Justification can be given in relation to the local context of critique, with a consideration of the needs under certain circumstances. Nevertheless, for Habermas, critique must be grounded in reason. What does Habermas have in mind by "reason"? For Habermas, it is a realm of truth and universal validity claims. When critique is grounded in reason, its claim is capable of transcending the local context and commanding universal consensus. In this way, critique will be differentiated from falsehood and ideology and will obtain the status of truth.

In sum, from the beginning Habermas's project has been burdened by the task of constructing a notion of reason which can provide the ground of the critique. In the following sections, I shall discuss his theory of knowledge and his theory of communicative action and see the steps he has taken in accomplishing the task.

## 1.2 Habermas's Theory of Knowledge

In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas (1978) distinguishes three different forms of knowledge, each of them linked to a particular kind of knowledge-constitutive interest and grounded in a certain fundamental characteristic of the human species. This can be seen as firstly, an attempt to confine scientific knowledge to its proper domain so as to counter the domination of science and technology in late-capitalist societies, and secondly, an attempt to clarify the proper domain of critical theory as well as its ground.

According to Habermas, there are three distinctive forms of knowledge, each linked to certain fundamental characteristics of human existence. The first form of knowledge is empirical-analytic sciences. It is related to the technical interest in control. This interest is generated in the activity of labor. To labor, or to engage in productive activity generates an interest in dominating the natural and social environment. Empirical-analytic sciences provide us with the knowledge for this rational, instrumental activity. Besides technical interest, there are non-technical interests which constitute knowledge. Historical-hermeneutic sciences are a form of knowledge which is constituted by the practical interest, an interest of mutual understanding which overcomes conflicts of interpretation and misunderstandings that arise in practical life.<sup>2</sup> This practical interest is related to an essential characteristic

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<sup>2</sup> Habermas (1978:176) says that in its very structure hermeneutic understanding is designed to guarantee, within cultural traditions, the possible action-orienting self-understanding of individuals and groups as well as reciprocal understanding between different individuals and groups. Without such a hermeneutic understanding, the communication may break

of human species: language. Linguistic communication is a mode of existence which cannot be reduced to that of labor. It concerns the action-orienting self-understanding of individuals and groups as well as reciprocal understanding between individuals and groups. As constituted by the practical interest, historical-hermeneutic sciences provide us with knowledge of intersubjectively established meanings.

The third form of knowledge concerns another kind of non-technical interest: the emancipatory interest. Habermas identifies critical theory as a form of knowledge constituted by the emancipatory interest, an interest in human autonomy and responsibility. This form of knowledge involves self-reflection. For instance, critical theory reflects upon the characteristics of human existence, the nature and status of human knowledge, and so on. Furthermore, it is a form of knowledge which is concerned with questions of values and standards. Critical arguments are supplied for judging and justifying the choice of certain values and standards.

In talking about knowledge as interest-constituted, Habermas refers 'constitution' to two meanings (Keat and Urry, 1982:223). First, the interest provides a criterion for what is counted as real, or what is counted as the object of study. For empirical-analytic sciences, what is real is what can be detected, measured and manipulated by means of controlled experiments. Nevertheless, guided by a different interest, historical-hermeneutic sciences can have a totally different object of study. The study of meanings needs not be excluded as unreal by the criteria of empirical-analytic sciences. Second, the interest determines the character of the standards employed in assessing the truth or falsity of statements made about these objects. For instance, in association with the technical interest, we have the standard of falsification which rejects statements that fail to predict. On the other hand, critical theory, which deals with the justification of values and norms, needs not fulfil the criterion of predictive ability.

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down, and a condition of survival is disturbed, one that is as elementary as the condition of the success of instrumental action: namely the possibility of unconstrained agreement and non-violent recognition. According to Habermas, because this is the presupposition of practice, we call the knowledge-constitutive interest of cultural sciences "practical".



With the concept of knowledge-constitutive interests, Habermas carries on the project of a critique of science in his own particular way. Similar to other critiques of ideology, Habermas's work unmask the interest behind scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, while the interest behind ideology is traditionally understood as deriving from either the psychological constellations of individuals or the objective positions of social groups, Habermas refers the interest underlying science to a fundamental interest which constitutes science as such. No science can ever free itself from this interest because it owes to it the constitution of its own logical-methodological rules. The problem of science, for Habermas, is not so much that this interest distorts knowledge or obscures objectivity; on the contrary, it owes its objectivity to this interest. The problem of science is that it overlooks the fact that it is constituted by a certain interest and that it lacks the ability to reflect upon this knowledge-constitutive interest. For Habermas, science has an inadequate self-understanding when it claims to be value-free or interest-free. Furthermore, Habermas argues, when science claims to be the only legitimate form of knowledge, it overlooks the possibility of other knowledge-constitutive interests, each of which has its own right to exist.<sup>3</sup> While the interest in technical control is related to the fundamental condition of the human species of work, the practical interest is related to that of interaction. The emancipatory interest, on the other hand, concerns the problems of power.

Habermas's critique of science is connected with his attempt to provide a ground for different modes of knowledge. Nevertheless, there are many ambiguities in the way he grounds critical theory. By relating the interest of science to work and the interest of hermeneutic science to language, Habermas intends to ground different modes of knowledge in the fundamental conditions of human existence. However, when it comes to critical theory it is not clear whether critical theory is to be grounded in a

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<sup>3</sup> In Chapter 4, I shall compare Habermas's critique of science with Foucault's analyses of knowledge and power. I point out that Habermas seeks to circumscribe the role of science in a particular domain. Science is considered as unproblematic when it is confined within its own domain. Foucault, on the other hand, achieves a radical problematization of science by showing that the relation between science and power is internal rather than external.

fundamental characteristic of human existence: power. In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, it is not clear whether "power" should be seen as a fundamental condition of existence or as a pathological phenomenon that needs to be removed. At times, Habermas's discussion of power seems to place 'power' on the same anthropological footing as work and interaction. For instance, he refers 'power' to a definite means of social organization. He states, the three categories of possible knowledge "originate in the interest structure of a species that is linked in its roots to definite means of social organization: work, language, and power" (Habermas, 1978:313). Nevertheless, more often he treats power as a pathological phenomenon. For instance, he claims that the emancipatory interest sets in motion a process of self-reflection which "frees consciousness from its dependence on hypostatized powers"; it determines what statements "express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed" (Habermas, 1978:313, 310). Hence the emancipatory interest can be read as an interest which seeks to undo the damage done in the other two areas.<sup>4</sup> However, if "power" is read in the latter sense, critical theory is considered in terms of opposition to the harm done by power, and there is still not an affirmative ground for critical theory. For Habermas, this simply repeats the mistake of earlier critical theory. With a determination to provide an affirmative ground for critical theory, Habermas seeks to have a notion of reason which would allow critical theory to be differentiated from false ideology and grounded in an affirmative way.

In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas attempts to specify the relation between critical theory and reason. Habermas argues that the interest of critical theory is the interest of reason: an interest in emancipation. He traces the development of the concept of reason from Kant, Hegel and Fichte and notices that the act of reason is to produce freedom. Enlightenment sees

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<sup>4</sup> In a discussion of Habermas's notion of knowledge-constitutive interests, Lenhardt (1972:239) elaborates that the domain of natural science creates the preconditions for total annihilation through warfare, or for ecological disaster; the domain of interaction may have problems of intolerance, mystification of the bases of power and inequality, and development of other pathological modes of communication. He says that it is these distortions that self-reflection is capable of dissolving.

reason in terms of its undoing dogmatism. Reason emancipates individuals from the error and unfree existence of dogmatism. Critical theory, Habermas argues, contains the same interest. It is a form of knowledge which involves self-reflection. In self-reflection, which is the mode of inquiry of critical theory, reason grasps itself as interested. This brings about "a critical dissolution of objectivism, that is the objectivistic self-understanding of the sciences, which suppresses the contribution of subjective activity to the preformed objects of possible knowledge" (Habermas, 1978:212). In this sense, critical theory undoes the dogmatism of science. It involves self-reflection which "is at once intuition and emancipation, comprehension and liberation from dogmatic dependence" (Habermas, 1978:208).

In addition to the view that the interest of reason is to emancipate, Habermas specifies the materialistic dimension of reason. He does not agree with Fichte's or Hegel's conception of reason. In contrast to Fichte's absolute self-positing of ego, and Hegel's absolute movement of mind, Habermas argues that the self-formative process of human species is not unconditioned. In the same way as Marx, Habermas sees the self-formative process as contingent upon the conditions of nature. The difference between them is that Habermas considers the conditions as having both objective and subjective natures, that is, the conditions of instrumental action and symbolic interaction. To this extent the self-formative process assumes the form of the technical and practical interests in natural sciences and hermeneutic sciences. As reason's interest in emancipation is invested in the self-formative process of human species, it aims at realizing the conditions of symbolic interaction and instrumental action. Habermas says, in self-reflection, reason combines knowledge and interest (1978:210-11).

In this sense, for Habermas, the role of critical theory does not only concern a critique of the dogmatism of science, but a reflection upon the subjective and objective conditions of the self-formative process. Critics however point out that Habermas has conflated two different senses of "self-



reflection".<sup>5</sup> Habermas, in a postscript to *Knowledge and Human Interests*, acknowledges that there are two meanings of reflection.

It occurred to me only after completing the book that the traditional use of the term 'reflection', which goes back to German Idealism, covers (and confuses) two things: on the one hand, it denotes the reflection upon the conditions of potential abilities of a knowing, speaking and acting subject as such; on the other hand, it denotes the reflection upon unconsciously produced constraints to which a determinate subject (or a determinate group of subjects, or a determinate species subject) succumbs in its process of self-reflection. (Habermas, 1975:182)

The first meaning of reflection is related to the Kantian idea of a critique of knowledge which involves reflection on the conditions of the possibility of knowledge; the second meaning is related to the Marxian idea of a critique of ideology which involves reflection that enables subjects to be freed from hidden constraints in the structure of social action. The first meaning of self-reflection contains a transcendental account of the a priori conditions of knowing for human subjects; the second meaning of self-reflection contains a practical account of the history of a specific group of subjects.<sup>6</sup>

As we shall see, Habermas's determination to provide an affirmative ground for critical theory leads him to move further away from the second approach of critique -- a historical self-reflection -- toward the first approach -- a transcendental reflection. He turns to a rational reconstruction of the universal conditions of reaching understanding. Instead of helping people to reflect upon the hidden constraints in their historically-specific contexts, the project of rational reconstruction concerns an elaboration of the general rules of human competences that govern the speech of humankind; instead of advancing a critique of the phenomenon of power and ideology in a particular context, critical theory turns to search for the universal and the necessary.

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of criticisms of Habermas and an elaboration of the distinction between historical self-reflection and transcendental reflection; see McCarthy, 1984, pp.91ff.

<sup>6</sup> See Roderick's (1986:65-9) discussion of the tension between Kantian approach and Marxian approach of critique.

### 1.3 Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action

Speaking in a transcendental voice, Habermas claims:

The human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori. What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we know: language. Through its structure, autonomy and responsibility are posited for us. Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus. (Habermas, 1978:314)

Habermas's project turns to language to provide an affirmative ground for critical theory. With a rational reconstruction of the universal conditions for the possibility of understanding, Habermas seeks to establish the theses that reason can be separated from power, and reason is internally connected to communicative action. He takes several steps in establishing the theses. Firstly, he distinguishes between different uses of language and regards an orientation to understanding as the original use of language. Secondly, after establishing the primacy of communicative action, he looks into the universal conditions for the success of a speech-act. Thirdly, he constructs a model of rational discourse which shows the rational basis of communicative action. I would like to show that, preoccupied with the construction of a notion of reason to ground critique, Habermas has taken certain steps instead of others, and has emphasized certain notions at the expense of others.

#### *Communicative action as the original mode of language use*

Habermas calls his work a theory of communicative action rather than a theory of communication. For he recognizes that there can be different uses of

language in communication. When participants are oriented to reaching understanding, they are engaging in communicative action; nevertheless, when participants are oriented to success and consequences, it is an instrumental-strategic use of language. With an account of Austin's speech-act theory, Habermas seeks to accomplish two tasks: first, developing a demarcation between communicative action and strategic action, and second, establishing the primacy and centrality of communicative action.

Habermas (1991:288-293) takes up Austin's speech-act theory and distinguishes between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. According to Habermas, for Austin, the speaker performs an action in saying something through illocutionary acts. It usually contains a performative verb in the first person present, for example, "I promise you (command you, confess to you) that p". On the other hand, through perlocutionary acts, the speaker produces an effect upon the hearer. That is, by carrying out a perlocutionary speech act, the speaker brings about something in the world. Habermas summarizes Austin's distinction in the following way: an illocutionary act is "to act in saying something"; a perlocutionary act is "to bring about something *through* acting in saying something" (Habermas, 1991:289).

Nevertheless, if illocutionary acts are embedded in contexts of interaction, then perlocutionary effects are often produced. That is, saying something often brings about something in the world. Habermas acknowledges the difficulties and controversies with regard to the demarcation between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Nevertheless, he determines to have a strict and clear-cut demarcation between them in order to support his demarcation between communicative action and strategic action, between reason and power.

According to Habermas (1991:290-2), we can adopt a few criteria to make clear the distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. He suggests that an illocutionary act is characterized by its self-sufficiency. That is, the communicative intent and the illocutionary aim follow from the manifest meaning of what is said, so that the hearer may understand and accept the utterance. For instance, S asserted to H that he gave notice to his



firm. S will have achieved illocutionary success if H understands the utterance and accepts it as true or right. By contrast, the communicative intent of perlocutionary acts does not follow the manifest content of the speech act. For instance, through informing H that he had given notice to his firm, S gave H a fright (as he intended to do). In sum, perlocutionary acts are firstly characterized by the fact that the effects go beyond the manifest meaning of the speech. Secondly, Habermas says, the effects are intended rather than unintended. Moreover, for Habermas, the intention of perlocutionary acts is often concealed.

Habermas asserts that whereas illocutionary aims may be achieved only if they are expressed, perlocutionary aims (like to give a fright, to cause upset, to plunge into doubt, to annoy, to mislead, to offend, to infuriate, to humiliate and so forth) may not be admitted as such. The speaker often conceals the aim in order to produce the desired effect. The perlocutionary aim can only be identified through the speaker's intent, or it can be inferred from the context of interaction. As we shall see, Habermas's criticism of perlocutionary acts relies a great deal upon the claim that perlocutionary aims are concealed. Nevertheless, it is in accord with our experience that in order to produce effects on other people, one does not have to hide the intention. To give a fright, to annoy, to infuriate, to humiliate and so forth does not require one to hide the intention in order to achieve the aim. Habermas's definition of perlocutionary acts in this way delimits them into a particular kind of speech act which distinguishes them from illocutionary acts. The demarcation between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts then serves as a basis for a demarcation between strategic action and communicative action.

After demarcating illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts, Habermas moves on to establish the connection between perlocutionary acts and strategic action, and that between illocutionary acts and communicative action. He shows that like other goal-directed action in general, the <sup>performer</sup> of a perlocutionary act has a certain purpose in mind. Speech acts are instrumentalized as a means to the success of the purpose. Hence for Habermas, the perlocutionary act is actually a special class of strategic

interaction in which speech acts are instrumentalized. In contrast, Habermas argues, participants of illocutionary acts only pursue illocutionary aims. What participants do is come to an understanding of the speech act itself. This is what Habermas counts as communicative action. Communicative action is defined by him as "those linguistically mediated interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary aims, and only illocutionary aims, with their mediating acts of communication". On the other hand, he regards strategic action as those interactions in which at least one of the participants wants to produce perlocutionary effects on others (Habermas, 1991:295).

After drawing a demarcation between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, with the former corresponding to communicative action and the latter corresponding to strategic action, Habermas seeks to establish the primacy and centrality of communicative action. He states, "the use of language with an orientation to reaching understanding is the original mode of language use", upon which the instrumental use of language use in general, is "parasitic" (Habermas, 1991:288). Habermas argues that in order to achieve perlocutionary aims the hearer has to understand what the speaker is saying, otherwise the speaker would not be able to bring about the desired effect. Therefore, Habermas concludes, perlocutionary effects have to depend first of all on illocutionary successes. To this extent, Habermas says, perlocutionary acts are "not an original use of language but the subsumption of speech acts that serve illocutionary aims under the conditions of action oriented to success" (Habermas, 1991:293).

According to Habermas's argument, one may conclude that illocutionary acts are primary and perlocutionary acts are secondary. However, Habermas does not classify perlocutionary acts as "secondary", but rather as "parasitic". It still leaves the question of why communicative action is privileged whereas perlocutionary acts are condemned as parasitic. Since Habermas defines perlocutionary acts as concealed strategic action, they are seen as a kind of communication pathologies. Habermas writes, "[a] speaker can pursue perlocutionary aims only when he deceives his partner concerning the fact that he is acting strategically" (Habermas, 1991:294). Hence, for Habermas, in

order to achieve perlocutionary aims, deception or manipulation is involved. According to his classification of action types, this belongs to the communication pathologies that he identifies in concealed strategic action. It is a case of manipulation, in which at least one party is oriented to success but pretends to satisfy the presuppositions of communicative action.<sup>7</sup>

Habermas further argues that perlocutionary acts are not suitable to be a model of action coordination, for they may contain an asymmetrical character of concealed strategic action, that is, at least one party is deceiving other participants regarding the fact that he is not satisfying the presuppositions of illocutionary acts. Habermas hence selects the model of communicative action in which, "all participants harmonize their individual plans of action with one another and thus pursue their illocutionary aims without reservation ... in order to arrive at an agreement that will provide the basis for a consensual coordination of individually pursued plans of action" (Habermas, 1991:294-5).

Since Habermas views perlocutionary acts in terms of deception and manipulation, they are therefore considered as parasitic and not suitable to be a linguistic model of action coordination. Whereas, for Habermas, communicative action is characterized by the intersubjective binding effects of speech-acts, and hence serves as a better model of action coordination. Nevertheless, one may argue against Habermas that in open strategic action participants also coordinate their action according to an understanding or agreement of the distribution of sanction and reward. What makes communicative action superior to strategic action? In the following sections, Habermas's attempt to prove the superiority of communicative action in terms of its internal relation to reason will be considered.

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<sup>7</sup> In his classification there are other pathologies, like self-deception, in which at least one party deceives himself/herself about the fact that s/he is oriented to success. Such cases of unconscious deception can be explained by psychoanalysts in terms of defence mechanisms. See Habermas, 1991, p.332.



*A rational reconstruction of the universal conditions of the possibility of understanding*

After defining the immanent telos of communication as an orientation to understanding, Habermas looks into the *universal* conditions that make possible the understanding. Whereas in the performance of actual speech the conditions for understanding may involve extra-linguistic, empirical and contingent factors, Habermas opts for a rational reconstruction of the universal, a priori conditions of understanding. In this sense, his project does not concern the study of the actual use of speech in concrete situations, but rather the study of the idealized use of speech. He looks into the communicative competence of an ideal speaker and regards it as the universal condition that makes possible understanding in communication.

Habermas says, in addition to linguistic competence, that is, the rules in phonetics, syntactics, and semantics, there are "rules that a competent speaker must master in order to form grammatical sentences and to utter them in an acceptable way". The mastery of these rules allows the speaker to "fulfil the conditions for a happy employment of sentences in utterances, no matter to which particular language the sentences may belong and in which accidental contexts the utterances may be embedded" (Habermas, 1979:26). Habermas thinks that in a similar way to the rules of linguistic competence, these rules of communicative competence admit of rational reconstruction in universal terms.

In an earlier article, Habermas (1970:364) specifies communicative competence in terms of the mastery of the dialogue-constitutive universals, which include personal pronouns, interrogative, imperative and assertive formators, modal formators and the like. In later discussions, Habermas views communicative competence in terms of a speaker's ability to achieve the pragmatic functions of an utterance. He states that there are three pragmatic functions of an utterance: to represent something, to express an intention, and

to establish a legitimate interpersonal relation. Propositional sentences can be used to represent a state of affairs; intentional verbs, modal forms, and so on can be used to express an intention; performative phrases, illocutionary indicators, and the like can be used to establish a legitimate interpersonal relation (Habermas, 1979:28). Communicative competence refers to the ability of a speaker i) to choose the propositional sentence in such a way that the truth conditions of the proposition stated are supposedly fulfilled; ii) to express it in such a way that the linguistic expressions represent what is intended; iii) to perform the speech-act in such a way that it conforms to recognized norms that govern interpersonal relations (Habermas, 1979:29). In other words, communicative competence concerns the ability to express what is supposed to be expressed.

In addition to the condition that the meaning of an utterance is clearly expressed, Habermas is interested in the conditions under which the hearer is motivated to take an affirmative position (to accept it). Communicative competence, in the latter sense, involves the ability of a speaker to motivate the hearer to accept the utterance. Hence, without making it explicit, Habermas's project of rational reconstruction gradually shifts from the reconstruction of the conditions of the possibility of understanding to the reconstruction of the conditions of the possibility of agreement.

Habermas (1991:297-9) claims that in order to achieve illocutionary success, the audience not only has to understand the meaning of an utterance but to *accept* it. According to Habermas, the acceptability of an illocutionary act depends upon a condition: the speaker's guarantee for securing claims to validity. In other words, a speaker can rationally motivate a hearer to accept his speech-act because he can assume the warranty for providing convincing reasons that would stand up to the hearer's challenges or criticisms. For instance, S told H to stop smoking. Whether H is willing to accede to the request depends on S's guarantee for securing the claim to validity. That is, when H has doubts about the request, S is ready to provide reasons like safety regulations in order to support the claim (Habermas, 1991:297-302).

With a theory of communicative competence, Habermas is able to argue that communicative action contains validity claims, and validity claims are connected to reasons or grounds. Nevertheless, to say that communicative action is connected to reasons is different from saying that communicative action is connected to *reason*. For a hearer to accept an utterance, the speaker needs to assume the warranty to provide reasons. But reasons can be of whatever kind as long as it is acceptable to the hearer. Hence, reasons given may be related to regulations, traditions, or even sanctions and rewards. Nevertheless, for Habermas, these reasons would not serve the purpose of demonstrating the rational basis of communicative action. In order to argue that communicative action is connected to *reason*, and not just reasons, Habermas has to delimit 'reasons' in terms of 'reasons that can convince the hearer so that the acceptance of an utterance is motivated in a rational way'. It is through the construction of a model of rational discourse that Habermas delimits reasons in a particular way and portrays an internal relation between communicative action and reason.

### *Rational discourse*

According to Habermas, when communicative action is seen as a model of action coordination, it is a kind of interaction in which participants coordinate their action plans on the basis of a consensual agreement achieved. There are three kinds of validity claims raised in speech-acts: first, the claim of truthfulness or sincerity; second, the claim of normative rightness; third, the truth claim. Participants who are oriented to understanding must have agreement with regard to all of these validity claims. In some cases they can be challenged by the hearer. For instance, Habermas writes, a professor makes a request "please bring me a glass of water" to a seminar participant. The seminar participant may think "no; you really only want to put me in a bad light in front of other seminar participants". In this case, the claim of truthfulness is challenged. Or he may think "no; you can't treat me like one of



your employees". In this case, the claim of normative rightness is challenged. Or he may think "no; the next water tap is so far away that I couldn't get back before the end of the session". In this case, the truth of the presupposition is challenged (Habermas, 1991:306-7). When any of these claims are challenged, Habermas contends, one has to provide reasons to clarify the misunderstanding in order not to give up communication; otherwise, one may resort to force and other strategic action. The warranty to provide reasons is seen as a necessary condition for action oriented to understanding. In Habermas's words, there is a "speech-act-immanent obligation to provide ground" in communicative action (Habermas, 1979:63-4).

In Habermas's view, one can provide immediate justification to expel ad hoc doubts. For instance, as elaborated by McCarthy, if there are disturbances concerning the intention of one party (say, by accusing him/her of lying, deceiving, misleading, pretending), mutual trust has to be restored through assurances, consistency of action, readiness to draw, accept and act on consequences, or willingness to assume implied responsibilities and obligations. On the other hand, the right of a party to perform the speech act can be questioned, for example, on the grounds that his role or status does not entitle him to do so, or that the act contravenes recognized norms, accepted values, or established authorities. In this case, one may need to appeal to these recognized norms, accepted values, established authorities, and so on. Finally, when the truth of what one says is challenged, the disturbance can be overcome by supplying information, citing experiences or authorities (McCarthy, 1984:289).

However, Habermas argues, when the claim to truth or the claim to normative rightness is challenged in a fundamental way so that the above means to resolve disagreement fail, communication has to be continued at a different level -- rational discourse. According to Habermas, rational discourse is a special form of communication in which validity claims are redeemed. Theoretical discourse concerns the redemption of truth claims; practical discourse concerns the redemption of normative claims. In the process of argumentation, Habermas states, participants thematize a

problematic claim. Relieved of the pressure of action and experience, in a hypothetical attitude, they test with reasons, and only with reasons, to see if the claim can rightfully stand (Habermas, 1991:25). Habermas argues that the agreement achieved is then based on the force of reason.

Habermas delineates more specifically the symmetry conditions that guarantee the reign of reason. These symmetry conditions are specified in the notion of an ideal speech situation.<sup>8</sup>

1. Each subject who is capable of speech and action is allowed to participate in discourses.
- 2a. Each is allowed to call into question any proposal.
- b. Each is allowed to introduce any proposal into the discourse.
- c. Each is allowed to express his/her attitudes, wishes and needs.
3. No speaker ought to be hindered by compulsion -- whether arising from inside or outside -- from making use of the rights secure under (1) and (2).

(Habermas, 1990:89)

These rules guarantee the reign of reason in a number of ways. Firstly, they purify the motives of participants. They define those who engage in discourse as people who have no other purposes in mind but a cooperative search for truth. For Habermas, in this way, the argumentation process is not distorted by purposes of deception or manipulation, and in this sense communicative action is distinguished from concealed strategic action. Secondly, the agreement achieved cannot draw its force directly from the social force of norms or traditional values. Any proposal, or any originally accepted framework, can be thrown into question. Hence not only the claim

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<sup>8</sup> In response to the criticism of the counterfactual character of the notion of an ideal speech situation, Habermas argues that the everyday appeal to validity-claims implicitly points to its possibility. Idealizations are built into everyday practice. He maintains that "the ideal speech situation is neither an empirical phenomenon nor a mere construct, but rather an unavoidable supposition reciprocally made in discourse" (McCarthy, 1984:310). Whenever we enter into a discourse with an intention to arrive at a rational agreement about certain claims, Habermas states, we must have already made this supposition, otherwise we would be caught up in a performative contradiction. For his elaboration of the nature and character of the ideal speech situation, see Habermas, 1990; 1982a.

itself but the conceptual framework behind the claim can also be contested. To arrive at a rational consensus would include the reflective weighing of the relative adequacy of competing frameworks, so that the rational consensus is in no sense contingent upon a particular framework. Thirdly, the rules guarantee that the discussion must be free from the influence of power or force. Participants have to produce cogent arguments that are convincing in virtue of their intrinsic properties. Only in this way is the agreement achieved rationally motivated rather than empirically motivated. Under these conditions, the consensus achieved is based on the mere force of the better argument, and as Habermas calls it, the force of reason.

With the model of rational discourse and the notion of an ideal speech situation, communicative action is seen as connected to reason. It is in this sense that Habermas thinks communicative action is superior to strategic action. Habermas states that in cases of open strategic action like the issue of simple imperatives, what makes the speaker expect the hearer to follow the imperative is his control over the positive and/or negative sanction (Habermas, 1991:300). In other words, the success of the imperative depends upon the speaker's holding power over the hearer. In this sense, the open strategic action expresses a power claim. The acceptability of the speech-act is empirically motivated by the fear of punishment or the desire for rewards. Therefore, though open strategic action can also be used as a model of action coordination, it is based on an agreement which is motivated by empirical considerations; whereas, for Habermas, the agreement achieved in communicative action is motivated in a rational way. Nevertheless, one can still probe the question of why agreement based on empirical considerations is seen as inferior. If power relations are unavoidable in our life, and if particular interests require negotiating compromise, one may argue against Habermas that strategic action which coordinates action on the basis of an empirically motivated agreement should have its own right to exist.

Habermas has portrayed an internal relation between communicative action and reason; this, however, is not achieved without cost. In order to designate an internal relation between reason and communicative action,



Habermas has twisted the meaning of "understanding" to serve his particular purpose. In defining communicative action in terms of an orientation to understanding, he refers "understanding" to different things in different analyses. In our ordinary use of the term "understanding", it refers to the ability of knowing the meaning of something. In this sense, we have "I understand what you said". In Habermas's reconstruction of communicative competence, he seems to have this meaning in mind when he refers communicative competence to the mastery of the rules that enable one to express what is supposed to be expressed. In this sense, communicative competence is the universal condition for participants to understand the meaning of an utterance. Nevertheless, at other times "understanding", for Habermas, is an agreement or a consensus. For instance, he says that when validity claims are questioned, participants oriented to understanding have to provide justification so as to clear up the disturbance and arrive at an agreement to coordinate action. However, in the model of rational discourse, the "understanding" Habermas has in mind is not only an agreement, but a rational agreement. When participants are oriented to understanding in discourse, it means they are oriented to "a process of mutually convincing one another on the basis of pure reasons". "Coming to an understanding" in this sense has been twisted to a particular kind of communication which is aimed at achieving a rational agreement.

To refer "understanding" as "a rational agreement" is quite different from our ordinary use of "understanding". Besides an ability to comprehend the meaning of something, we refer "understanding" to putting oneself into the position of the other so as to be aware of the other's feelings or views. In this sense, we say "please be understanding". Or we may say, "the employer and the workers have not reached an agreement yet, but they have come to an understanding with each other". Habermas's focus on rational agreement undermines the importance of this meaning of "understanding". It is possible to argue that, based on this meaning of "understanding", we can pursue another model of action coordination. Instead of pursuing Habermas's line of

rational agreement, some feminists propose a model of "care" for action coordination.<sup>9</sup>

There is another observation of the limits of Habermas's model of rational discourse. In discourse, validity claims are treated as cognitively testable validity claims, and it is in this sense that communicative action is considered as connected to reason. Nevertheless we must notice that discourse concerns only the test of truth claims and normative claims: theoretical discourse concerns the redemption of truth claims; practical discourse concerns the redemption of normative claims. Rational discourse, however, cannot deal with the redemption of the claim of truthfulness. When the sincerity or truthfulness of an utterance is doubted, the speaker is obliged to prove trustworthiness. Nevertheless, the proof is not carried out in discourse. Instead, Habermas states, the speaker may provide assurance, and the claim of truthfulness can only be checked against the consistency of the speaker's subsequent behaviour (Habermas, 1979:64). Therefore, one may argue that the claim to truthfulness marks the limits of discourse.

In contrast to the truth claim which deals with the external world as a totality of facts, and the normative claim which deals with the social world as a totality of normatively regulated interpersonal relations, the truthfulness claim deals with "a particular inner world (of the speaker) as the totality of his intentional experiences". It is based on this particular inner world that a speaker expresses his subjectivity (Habermas, 1979:67-8). If the inner world is the basis for the self-understanding of individuals, a theory which studies the condition of understanding in communication should have laid much emphasis on the domain of inner world. As Habermas's theory is concerned not so much with understanding as with rational agreement, he constructs a model of discourse which focuses exclusively on the truth and the normative claims. The focus on cognitively testable claims should be seen as pursuing a

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, in arguing for a positive recognition and re-evaluation of traditional feminine virtues of nurturance and compassion, Gilligan (1988:xix,xx) proposes an ethic of care, which is a distinctively feminine moral ground for decision-making, problem-solving, action and choice.

line at the expense of the importance of the truthfulness claim and the inner world of individuals.

## Conclusion

This chapter not only introduces the problematics of Habermas's project and the theoretical framework developed in response to those problematics, but also serves as a critique of Habermas's work. The criticism, however, is intended not as much a negation as a reflection upon the limits of his theory. It shows that Habermas's preoccupation with certain problematics leads him to take certain steps instead of others, and enables him to emphasize certain notions at the expense of others. In this concluding section, I shall briefly summarize the steps that he has taken.

Habermas claims that through engaging in self-reflection, the emancipatory interest of critical theory is an interest of reason. Nevertheless, one should differentiate two different senses of "self-reflection". A Marxian sense of reflection concerns a critique of ideology which enables subjects to be freed from hidden constraints in the structure of social action. A Kantian sense of reflection, on the other hand, concerns a search for the universal conditions of potential abilities of a knowing, speaking and acting subject. Since Habermas thinks that critical theory needs to be grounded in an affirmative notion of reason, hence, instead of pursuing a Marxian sense of reflection which freed subjects from the constraints of historically-specific contexts, he opts for a Kantian kind of reconstruction of the conditions of understanding; instead of engaging in a critical-historical reflection, Habermas moves toward a transcendental reflection of the universal conditions of speech.

In order to designate an internal relation between reason and language, Habermas has taken a few steps in developing his theory of communicative action. He determines to draw a strict demarcation between illocutionary acts and communicative action on the one hand, and perlocutionary acts and



strategic action on the other. He refers to the former as a domain of reason and validity claims, whereas the latter as a domain of power, deception and manipulation. Nevertheless, as I pointed out in the discussion, the production of perlocutionary effects does not necessarily involve deception or manipulation. Perlocutionary effects actually arise when illocutionary acts are embedded in the context of interaction. Habermas delimits perlocutionary acts to ones where the intentions are concealed to suit his purpose.

The other step that Habermas takes is to reconstruct the conditions of the possibility of understanding in communicative action. He is interested not only in the rules which enable a speaker to express what s/he wants to express, but in the conditions under which the hearer is motivated to accept the utterance. Therefore, without making it explicit, Habermas shifts from a reconstruction of the conditions of the possibility of understanding to a reconstruction of the conditions of the possibility of agreement. Lastly, for Habermas, the focus on agreement is not enough, for strategic action also coordinates action on the basis of agreement. In order to be differentiated from strategic action, communicative action is not simply oriented to agreement, but rational agreement. Habermas develops a model of rational discourse so as to guarantee that the agreement arrived at in communicative action is rationally motivated.

In this way, Habermas achieves the task of constructing a notion of communicative reason so as to provide a ground for critical theory. Nevertheless, what must be rendered explicit is the twist he has given to the term "understanding". While communicative action is defined as oriented to understanding, "coming to an understanding" is delimited as a particular kind of communication which is aimed at rational agreement. Moreover, despite the fact that communicative action is defined as oriented to understanding, the claim of truthfulness is not received the same attention as the truth claim and the normative claims. In concentrating on rational discourse and cognitively testable validity claims, Habermas leaves out the importance of the claim of truthfulness and the whole domain of a particular inner world.

To close the discussion, I would like to cite the comments of Dreyfus and Rabinow (1986) on Habermas's project. They argue that if one looks back at the arguments by which Habermas arrives at his universal norms, one would find him making two interpretive moves disguised by the fact that they constitute the heart of western philosophical tradition. First, Habermas privileges the communicative use of language without taking into consideration that other philosophers of language, such as Heidegger and Charles Taylor, have interpreted language as that which *first opens up* an arena for action by letting things appear *as* something. Second, Habermas proceeds to exclude the perlocutionary effects of what is said and assert that ideally only the illocutionary contents should play a role in reaching agreement. This move, they argue, excludes rhetoric as well as authority based on accumulated experience, and further reduces language from its communicative function to an intellectualist function. They conclude that because his work contains "these two important interpretive reductions, Habermas's universal objective communicative norms turn out to be quite modern in their *ungroundedness*" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986:119). It is hoped that this chapter has shed light on the limits of Habermas's project as well as the kinds of *ungroundedness* associated with his theoretical framework.

## Chapter 2

### HABERMAS'S ANALYSIS OF POWER AND PATHOLOGIES OF MODERN SOCIETIES

Habermas's project focuses on two tasks: first, searching for the ground of critique, and second, providing a critique of power and pathologies in modern societies. As discussed in Chapter 1, in developing a theory of communicative action, Habermas constructs a notion of communicative reason as the ground of critique. Now we come to see how he accomplishes the second task. For Habermas, a critique of power concerns a differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power. His notion of communicative action, he contends, provides the yardstick according to which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. In the first part of this chapter, I shall discuss how Habermas uses his notion of communicative action to ground legitimate power. Habermas further analyzes the pathologies of modern societies from the standpoint of communicative action. He argues that modern pathologies are a result of the replacement of communicative action in the spheres which are dependent upon it as the mechanism for action coordination. The second part of the chapter will discuss how Habermas uses his notion of communicative action to provide an analysis of pathologies in modern societies.

Habermas's critique of power attempts to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. This differentiation, for him, is also a differentiation between reason and force. Illegitimate power is one which is connected to force and implies a problem of coercion. Legitimate power, on the other hand, is one which is connected to reason. His notion of communicative reason, he asserts, provides the basis for legitimate power. He considers power which is based on the consensus achieved in communicative action as legitimate and connected to reason. This legitimate power, for Habermas, is separated from force and avoids the problem of coercion. In Part I, I intend to examine



whether Habermas's communicative concept of power is successful in resolving the problem of coercion which he perceives in a relation of force. I point out that in developing a communicative concept of power, Habermas has produced two distinct versions: one conceives legitimate power as a form of communicative action; the other conceives power in terms of purposive-instrumental action of which the legitimacy is defined by determination of collective goals in communicative action. I argue that these two versions of communicative concept of power contain contradictions overlooked by Habermas, and they are both far from successful in resolving the problems of force and coercion.

In analyzing pathologies of modern societies, Habermas not only relies upon his notion of communicative action, but also produces a concept of lifeworld which consists of systems of culture, society and personality that serve as the background for communicative action. Part II will present Habermas's concept of lifeworld and show how he uses the concept to analyze pathologies of modern societies. It points out that since Habermas considers communicative action as separated from power (or force), likewise, lifeworld, being the background of communicative action, is seen as inherently free from power. The phenomena of modern pathologies hence require an explanation elsewhere than the lifeworld. Habermas develops a thesis of "colonization of lifeworld" which explains modern pathologies as a result of the invasion of certain alien or external forces, namely forces of monetarization and bureaucratization, into the lifeworld. Habermas's thesis requires him to separate out from these forces an innocent domain of lifeworld; this demarcation, as I shall argue, does not seem to be possible nor desirable.

## 2.1 Communicative Action and Legitimate Power

For Habermas, his theory of communicative action provides not only a basis of critique in reason, but also a yardstick according to which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. Nevertheless, throughout his discussions of power, Habermas does not have only one way of applying the concept of communicative action but uses it in different ways and hence produces different versions of a communicative concept of power.<sup>1</sup> I shall delineate two distinct versions of Habermas's communicative concept of power: an earlier version which conceives legitimate power as arising in *communicative action*; a later version which conceives power in terms of *purposive-instrumental action* of which the legitimacy is defined by determination of collective goals in communicative action. I shall discuss each of the versions in Part I of the chapter.

There are questions that I would like to put to Habermas. In producing the earlier version of communicative concept of power, Habermas criticizes instrumental-strategic action in terms of its relation to force and coercion, and determines to have a notion of legitimate power which is under the category of communicative action. He argues that legitimate power only arises in communicative action. His later version of communicative concept of power, however, understands legitimate power in terms of instrumental-purposive action rather than as a form of communicative action. Is there any

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<sup>1</sup>Habermas (1982a:269) says, "I am inclined, on the one hand, to agree with Hannah Arendt in regarding communicatively shared convictions as a source of legitimate power, and the communicative practice of everyday life in the life-world as a generator of power that is acknowledged without coercion (Zwang). On the other hand, both the Weberian concept of domination (Herrschaft), in the sense of institutionalized mixtures of power and force, and the Parsonian concept of power, as a subsystem medium, (to be sure, only for problems of employing authorizations to power in modern societies) are useful". For his discussion of Arendt's concept of power, see Habermas, 1977; for his discussion of Weber's concept of power, see Habermas, 1976; for his discussion of Parsons' concept of power, see Habermas, 1987b. In these discussions, Habermas applies his concept of communicative action in different ways. My examination of Habermas's communicative concept of power mainly focuses on his discussions of Arendt's and Parsons' concepts of power.

contradiction incurred by upholding these two different versions of a communicative concept of power? Habermas is preoccupied with drawing a demarcation between legitimate and illegitimate power. For him, while illegitimate power is one which is connected with force and coercion, legitimate power is separated from force and coercion. What I want to ask is: how far is he successful in accomplishing the task?

### *Legitimate power arises in communicative action*

In an earlier discussion of power, Habermas argues that legitimate power arises only in communicative action. He says, "[l]egitimate power arises only among those who form common convictions in unconstrained communication" (Habermas, 1977:18). This section presents Habermas's criticism of the instrumental-strategic concept of power and discusses the alternative that he provides, that is, a communicative concept of power. I point out that for Habermas, power which is conceived in terms of instrumental-strategic action implies an exercise of force and the possibility of coercion. In order to deal with the problem of force and coercion, he thinks we must have a concept of power which is separated from force and excludes the possibility of coercion. Habermas's way of dealing with the problem of force and coercion, as I shall argue in this section, is not without problems. Before discussing the problems, I shall first present this version of a communicative concept of power.

According to Habermas, one can start from a model of communicative action and have a communicative concept of power. This communicative concept of power provides an alternative to an instrumental-strategic concept of power. He is critical that political theorists from Hobbes to Schumpeter have focused on the phenomenon of power acquisition and maintenance and identified power with a potential for successful strategic action, and thus overlooked the possibility of formulating a concept of power in terms of



communicative action. Power, Habermas argues, instead of representing the ability to achieve certain desirable results in a strategic action, should be understood as "the ability to agree upon a common course of action in unconstrained communication" (Habermas, 1977:3).<sup>2</sup> Although agreement is implied in both the instrumental-strategic concept of power and the communicative concept of power, nevertheless, for Habermas, there are two kinds of difference. Firstly, the agreement formed in the instrumental-strategic action is not seriously intended while in the latter case it is. Secondly, in the former conception of power, the agreement reached may involve coercion while in the latter case the agreement points to a noncoercive establishment of intersubjective relations. I shall elaborate on Habermas's view of these differences with reference to his comments on Weber's concept of power.

Habermas asserts that Weber views power from a teleological model of action in which individuals choose appropriate means to realize the goal they set for themselves. To the extent that the realization of the goal depends on the behavior of others, the individuals adopt different means to instigate others to the desired behavior. These means, like the threat of sanctions or persuasion, may bring about certain agreements. Nevertheless, Habermas says, as the individuals are oriented to their own success, the agreement reached only serves the purpose of attaining their respective goals. Habermas

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<sup>2</sup> Habermas (1977) understands it as Arendt's view of power, and he endorses this view in his discussion of a communicative concept of power. He says that Arendt sees power as the ability to agree upon a common course of action in unconstrained communication. She does not refer power to the disposition over means of influencing another's will, means which are to be possessed. Instead, for Arendt, power arises among a group of people who form common convictions and act in concert. Arendt says, as reproduced by Habermas, "power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only as long as the group keeps together" (Habermas, 1977:4). Arendt sees this power in critical-revolutionary activities like the Hungarian uprisings of 1956 and the civil disobedience and student protests of the sixties, "when revolutionaries seize the power that lies in the streets; when a populace committed to passive resistance confront alien tanks with their bare hands; when convinced minorities contest the legitimacy of existing laws and organize civil obedience; when the 'pure desire for action' manifests itself in the student movement" (Habermas, 1977:13). These incidents, for Arendt, show that power is not to be possessed by any group or person; instead it springs up between men when they act together according to their common convictions, and power vanishes the moment they disperse.

argues, "an agreement of this sort, which is pursued one-sidedly with the proviso of being instrumental for one's own success, is not meant seriously" (Habermas, 1977:4).

A seriously intended agreement, for Habermas, must be pursued as an end in itself and cannot be instrumentalized for other purposes. In his words, "power is not an instrumentalization of another's will, but the formation of a common will in a communication directed to reaching agreement" (Habermas, 1977:4). Such formation of a common will is characterized by the fact that participants are oriented to understanding, and pursue illocutionary aims only. They have no other purposes except a cooperative search for understanding. For Habermas, this communicative concept of power allows one to separate power (*Macht*) from force (*Gewalt*) and coercion (*Zwang*).

Habermas argues that Weber's conception has confused "power" with "force" (Habermas, 1977:3-4). In Weber's teleological model, Habermas says, individuals must have at their disposal the means to instigate others to the desired behavior so as to attain their own goals. Weber calls this disposition over means to influence the will of others "power". Nevertheless, Habermas would rather regard it as force. "Force", for Habermas, means the disposition over means of coercion. In a relation of force, because one can assert one's will over others even against opposition, coercion is implied. In this sense, for Habermas, Weber's concept of power not only confuses power and force, but also fails to exclude the possibility of coercion. Habermas argues, "the only alternative to coercion exercised by one side against the other is free agreement among participants" (Habermas, 1977:4). His communicative concept of power, for him, is oriented toward such a free agreement among participants; it is oriented toward a formation of common will in which participants "do not use language perlocutionarily, that is, merely instigate other subjects to a desired behavior, but illocutionarily, that is, for the *noncoercive* establishment of intersubjective relations" (Habermas, 1977:6).

Habermas is correct to say that Weber's concept of power does not exclude the possibility of coercion; nevertheless, I argue, it is not clear if this is a weakness. Habermas believes that in order to deal with the problem of force

and coercion, one should produce a concept of power which is distinguished from force and excludes the possibility of coercion. Weber's approach, I suggest, can be read as a different way to deal with the problem of force and coercion. Weber defines power as the probability that an individual is in a position to carry out his own will *even if* there is resistance. In other words, the exercise of power may or may not involve coercion and there may or may not be resistance. One needs to engage in specific analyses of the means used by the individual in order to see whether coercion is involved. In some cases, means like persuasion and influence might be used, which are different from means of coercion. Nevertheless, Habermas does not follow this path. While noticing that in Weber's concept of power there can be a whole range of means to influence others' will, such as "by the threat of sanctions, by persuasion, or by a clever channelling of choices", Habermas is not interested in differentiating these means and seeing which of them is involved in a certain exercise of power. Instead he lumps them together in the category of "force", and seeks to produce a concept of power which is separated from this category.

Habermas says that what is exercised in strategic action is "force in a more or less refined, more or less latent manner". It is only through linking power to communicative action that power is separated from force. In his words:

the concept of force (Gewalt) already has a central place in the action theory sketched above: to the degree that interactions cannot be coordinated through achieving understanding, the only alternative that remains is force exercised by one against others (in a more or less refined, more or less latent manner). The typological distinction between communicative and strategic action says nothing else than this. (1982:269)

Facing the possibility of coercion in strategic action, Habermas seeks to provide a communicative concept of power which is insulated from this possibility.

Habermas's concern to separate power and force is again revealed in his discussion of Parsons' concept of power. While Parsons thinks that power in a



political system can be generated through political influence, Habermas insists that power can only be generated in communicative action. For Parsons, the generation of power means a rise in the activities of the political-administrative system. To increase the output of the system requires an increase on the input side. Political leaders can exert their influence to arouse new needs in the electorate so that an increase in demand results. As a stronger input of mass loyalty is obtained, the political-administrative system can increase its activities and hence power is generated in the process. In opposition to Parsons' view, Habermas holds that this is only an increase in force, not an increase in the legitimate power of the political system. Habermas argues that, as Parsons says, there is a fine line between responsible political leadership which commits the collectivity to the fulfilment of obligations and reckless overextendedness. To generate power through persuasion or manipulation does not allow one to perceive this fine line. He asserts that legitimate power cannot be generated from above, but only among those who participate in unconstrained communication (Habermas, 1977:19-20).

In short, for Habermas, legitimate power cannot be generated in constrained communication, like persuasion or manipulation. He sees that only unconstrained communication guarantees the legitimacy of power; only unconstrained communication separates power from force; only unconstrained communication excludes the possibility of coercion. It is the condition of "unconstrained communication" that guarantees power to be free from force and coercion.

Nevertheless his communicative concept of power is not only to do with unconstrained communication, but *agreement* formed in unconstrained communication.<sup>3</sup> Habermas defines legitimate power on the basis of free

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<sup>3</sup> In Habermas's view, power has to be based on common convictions in unconstrained communication in order to be regarded as legitimate, otherwise it can be seen as under the influence of ideology which produces illusionary convictions. A basic problem of this model is that it assumes "nonillusionary common convictions" and "unconstrained communication" always go together, but in fact they do not. Firstly, instead of agreement, there can be disagreement in unconstrained communication; secondly, instead of illusionary convictions, nonillusionary convictions can be formed in constrained communication. In other words,

*agreement*. What he adopts is a consensual approach. He is interested in "the formation of a *common* will", "the formation of *common* convictions", "the ability to *agree* upon a common course of action" in unconstrained communication. This consensual approach, I argue, brings back the possibility of coercion in his communicative concept of power.

Habermas seems to assume common convictions are a natural result of unconstrained communication and that they provide the basis for legitimate power to be separated from force and coercion. Nevertheless, one may ask: why should we assume that common convictions or consensus is a natural outcome of unconstrained communication? Even if an ideal speech situation exists, nothing guarantees consensus in argumentation. On the contrary, the ideal speech situation points toward a plurality of standpoints in argumentation. Lyotard (1984:65-6) points out that it is not possible, or even prudent, to follow Habermas in orienting our treatment of the problem of legitimation in the direction of a search for universal consensus. For it is clear that language games are heteromorphous, subject to heterogeneous sets of pragmatic rules. Participants hence are not even able to agree on the rules according to which they engage in argumentation. Moreover, instead of assuming consensus as the goal of dialogue, Lyotard argues, it is only a particular state of discussion.

If consensus is a particular state of discussion, it cannot be taken for granted. On the contrary, it is what is in need of an explanation. For instance, to be able to arrive at a consensus presupposes a high degree of homogeneity among participants, and even coercion in bringing about this kind of homogeneity. As will be discussed in Part II of the thesis, Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power shows that it is disciplinary coercion that brings about such homogeneity.

Therefore, instead of assuming common convictions are the natural outcome of unconstrained communication, one should ask whether coercion

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unconstrained communication does not have to be followed by common convictions, and common convictions do not have to be formed in unconstrained communication. Habermas cannot assume that they always go together.

is the precondition that makes common convictions possible. In this sense, Habermas is mistaken in thinking that his communicative concept of power has excluded the possibility of coercion. He claims that the condition of unconstrained communication has excluded the possibility of coercion; nevertheless, his emphasis on *agreement* formed in unconstrained communication reinstates this possibility. His communicative concept of power, I conclude, is far from successful in dealing with the problem of coercion.

In this section, we have discussed Habermas's earlier version of communicative concept of power which conceives legitimate power as arising in communicative action. Habermas nevertheless realizes that there are problems with conceiving power as a form of communicative action. In a criticism of Arendt's work, Habermas admits that to see power merely in terms of communicative action would make the mistake of screening all strategic elements out of politics, and removing politics from its relation to the economic and social environment in which it is embedded through the administrative system (Habermas, 1977:16). Therefore, he thinks that we need to have a communicative concept of power in which there is a place for strategic action. In the following section, I shall discuss the other version of Habermas's communicative concept of power.

### *Power serves the realization of collective goals*

Habermas thinks that there is a need to produce a communicative concept of power which has a place for instrumental-strategic action. He considers Parsons' systems-theoretical concept of power as useful since it deals with the purposive-rational action associated with the employment of power in political rule. In taking up Parsons' concept of power, Habermas now conceives of power as a medium for the realization of collective goals. In other words, rather than conceiving of power as a form of communicative action, he



now understands power in terms of purposive-rational action that serves the realization of collective goals. In arguing that collective goals have to be determined in rational discourse, Habermas supplements Parsons' concept of power with a dimension of communicative action and produces a communicative concept of power.

This section presents Habermas's formulation of a different version of a communicative concept of power. I argue that with this version of the communicative concept of power he produces a myth that power is safe while after all power is inherently linked to the force and coercion that he perceives in instrumental-strategic action. Before discussing this version of communicative concept of power, let us first look into Parsons' concept of power. I would like to show that Parsons' concept of power implies the possibility of coercion and requires force to play a counterpart. Habermas, in taking up Parsons' concept of power, seems to overlook the problem of force and coercion that he was once concerned about in his earlier discussion of the communicative concept of power.

Parsons considers power from the perspective of a political system. A political system is a system of hierarchical positions in which people make binding decisions for the realization of collective goals. Power, for Parsons, is the generalized capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by units in a system which would serve the realization of collective goals (Parsons, 1969:361). With this conception of power, Parsons argues against C. Wright Mill's zero-sum concept of power. According to Parsons, Mills tends to think that people who hold power have usurped it where they had no right, and that they intend to use it for attaining sectional interests and to the detriment of others. Parsons argues that although power is sometimes exercised for attaining sectional interests, this is only a secondary and derived phenomenon (Parsons, 1960:220-1). Power, Parsons says, in its central place in the political system, serves the attainment of collective goals, and authority is the institution within which the incumbent has "the legitimated right to make certain categories of decisions and bind a collectivity to them" (Parsons, 1969:322). In other words, Parsons produces a concept of power which has its

bearing on collective interests rather than sectional interests, and the exercise of which is based on a legitimate right.

The hierarchical component of the political system, or the right of some people to use power over other people, has been one of the central concerns of theories of power. Parsons, by formulating the inequality of power in a legitimate form, has in effect dissolved this concern. He writes, "the power of A over B is, in its legitimized form, the right of A, as a decision-making unit involved in collective process, to make decisions that take precedence over those of B, in the interests of the effectiveness of the collective operation as a whole" (Parsons, 1969:36). According to Parsons' formulation, the inequality of power is legitimized in terms of its bearing on the collective goals. In order to have goal-attainment, from Parsons' perspective, there must be priorities as to which decisions take precedence over others, and which decision-making agencies have the right to make decisions at what levels. The hierarchical ordering is hence seen as indispensable, as well as functional, for goal-attainment.

While admitting that the hierarchical component of the political system is indispensable and functional for goal-attainment, one can still worry about the problems associated with an asymmetry of power. Habermas has criticized that Weber's concept of power implies the possibility within a social relationship to impose one's will over another even against opposition. Now this possibility of coercion reappears in Parsons' concept of power. Motivated by this worry, one may ask: could there be a case where the decision made by the higher authority is in opposition to the wishes of the subordinates, and hence requires coercion for compliance?

Parsons answers that the problem of coercion arises only when the power of the higher authority-holder is not completely institutionalized (Parsons, 1982:115-28). By institutionalization, Parsons means the integration of the complementary role-expectation with the generalized value system. For Parsons, this integration relies basically upon the socialization process in the family, school, play groups and community. It gives individuals need-dispositions which can only be gratified by conformity with institutionalized

role-expectation. The sanctions associated with role-expectation will also reinforce the need-dispositions to conform with the expectation. The institutionalization of value-orientation patterns constitutes the mechanisms of integration for a social system.

Nevertheless, as Parsons points out, there are integrative problems of a social system, and these problems, I argue, imply the possibility of coercion. Parsons says, "this type of analysis asserts the imperfect integration of all actual social systems" (Parsons, 1982:128). For instance, it is not unusual to have more than one set of value-orientations in a social system. They may imply different sets of role-expectation patterns which compete with one another. From Parsons' perspective, the question is how to integrate them around a basic pattern. However, from the perspective of traditional concerns about power, the question is whether this kind of integration involves coercion and repression. In this sense, the process of institutionalization may have already involved coercion. Power which is dependent upon institutionalization of value patterns can be seen as dependent upon coercion.

Not only does Parsons' notion of power imply the possibility of coercion, it also requires force to play a counterpart. As revealed in Parsons' definition of power, sanctions are specified in securing compliance. Parsons says, power is the "generalized capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations ... and where in case of recalcitrance there is a presumption of enforcement by negative situational sanctions" (Parsons, 1969:361). He regards the application of negative sanctions as a deterrent of unwanted action, force being the ultimate deterrent. Force, Parsons says, can be seen as a kind of backup of power, like gold as a backup of money. When other means of effectiveness which are dependent on institutionalized order fail, force is used to cope with the danger. In this sense, power and force can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Power is inherently linked to force.

Habermas's criticism of Parsons' concept of power can be seen as motivated by the concern about coercion. Nevertheless, I argue, instead of keeping in mind the possibility of coercion and allowing this possibility to remind us of the danger of power, Habermas thinks that it can be



compensated for by allowing people to participate in the determination of collective goals. Habermas argues that since power exercised at the societal level has to be expressed as organizational power, that is, those who have a right to exercise power occupy a position in an organization in which power relations are ordered hierarchically, this asymmetrical character of power calls for a more demanding normative anchoring of power. For the one who is subordinated is structurally disadvantaged; the one in higher authority can cause harm to those who disobey. Habermas argues that this disadvantage to one of the parties can only be compensated for by reference to collectively desired goals. In contrast to Parsons' relying on the cultural value system to provide consensus on the collective goals, Habermas argues for a participatory model in the determination of collective goals. He says, "the disadvantage can be offset only if those subject to him can themselves examine the goals and either endorse or repudiate them" (Habermas, 1987:271).

According to Habermas, in Parsons' model power also needs to secure confidence, but Parsons thinks that power can draw legitimation from the cultural value system, and the institutionalization of public office can bring about compliance. Nevertheless, Habermas would like to argue that the structural characteristics of power require a higher ground for securing confidence. Besides the fact that power is characterized by an asymmetry, Habermas argues, there is another structural characteristic of power: power does not only ask for compliance, but obligation. In other words, it is not only a matter of obedience to laws, but carrying out a duty. Habermas argues that the fulfilment of obligations has to be based on the recognition of normative validity claims (Habermas, 1987:271). His model of rational discourse enables collective goals to be determined in accordance with the recognition of validity claims.

Habermas provides a model of rational discourse for the determination of collective goals. He argues that those who are affected by power "have to be in a position to contest [the claim] that the goals set are collectively desired or are, as we say, in the general interest". Hence, "the connection to consensus

formation in language, backed only by potential reasons, is clear" (Habermas, 1987:271-2). According to Habermas's discourse model, by proposing something as a collective goal, one is making a claim that a certain norm would satisfy the general interest. The validity of the normative claim has to be tested in practical discourse. The aim of practical discourse is to come to rationally motivated consensus about the proposed norm. This consensus is to be based solely on the force of a better agreement and should not be the result of any constraints in discourse. The absence of constraints is characterized by what is presupposed in discourse: an ideal speech situation.<sup>4</sup> It refers to the pragmatic structure of discourse in which all participants can have a symmetrical distribution of chances to employ speech-acts, and where the discussion is free from any distorting influences, including open domination, conscious strategic behavior and self-deception. With the presupposition of an ideal speech situation, Habermas contends that the consensus arrived at concerning a certain norm is rationally motivated.

In the process of discursive-will formation, Habermas argues, the norms which serve general interests would command the recognition of all. He says:

only communicative ethics guarantees the generality of admissible norms and the autonomy of acting subjects solely through the discursive redeemability of the validity claims with which norms appear. That is, generality is guaranteed in that the only norms that may claim generality are those on which everyone affected agrees (or would agree) without constraint if they enter into (or would enter into) a process of discursive will-formation. (Habermas, 1975:89)

Therefore, on the one hand, the discourse model allows the claims of power to be redeemed in a rational way, that is, solely on the basis of the force of the better argument; on the other hand, it allows the recognition of a claim which serves general interests.

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 1 for my discussion of Habermas's model of rational discourse and the notion of an ideal speech situation.

In the same way as Parsons, Habermas is concerned with the legitimation of power. They agree that the asymmetry of power relations can be compensated for or legitimated by reference to collective goals. The difference is that instead of relying on the institutionalization generated in the cultural value system, Habermas proposes a discourse model for the determination of collective goals. Habermas thinks that because collective goals are open for discursive tests and determined according to their bearing on general interests, the power grounded in this way cannot be used against the people concerned. Nevertheless, I contend, in taking up Parsons' notion of legitimate power and supplementing it with a dimension of communicative action, Habermas seems to leave behind the criticisms that he once made about instrumental-strategic action. He also fails to recognize the contradiction that is incurred in upholding the two versions of communicative concept of power.

Applying his theory of communicative action in this way, Habermas moves away from the former communicative concept of power which places it in the category of communicative action rather than instrumental-strategic action. According to the earlier communicative concept of power, participants have no other purpose except a cooperative search for understanding. Nobody would use any empirical means to instigate others to desirable behavior and the possibility of coercion associated with strategic action is to be excluded. Habermas criticizes Parsons' work from this perspective. He says that Parsons repeats a teleological concept of power at the level of systems theory. Like Weber, Parsons sees power as serving the realization of certain goals. Both of their conceptions of power fail to see power as produced by a seriously intended agreement which cannot be instrumentalized for other ends (Habermas, 1977:5). In this sense, Parsons' concept of power is flawed from the beginning. Now, in taking up Parsons' concept of power, Habermas moves to a self-defeating position.

Arguing in line with Parsons, Habermas sees power in terms of instrumental-strategic action. Instead of seeing it as a kind of communicative action, like the earlier version of communicative concept of power, he sees



communicative action as providing an appropriate basis for legitimation of power. Power which goes through a discursive test of collective goals is considered as legitimate. In supplementing power with a dimension of communicative action, Habermas produces a myth that power is safe while after all, power, being a *medium* for the realization of collective goals, is itself to do with disposition over means of sanctions. Force is the backup of power; force and power are inherently linked to each other. In addition, as discussed before, there is a possibility for coercion when the power of the higher authority holder is not completely institutionalized. In this sense, power is connected to the force and coercion that Habermas once opposed in instrumental-strategic action. Guided by the insights of Foucault's works, as will be discussed in the following chapters, one may see that in order to serve the realization of economic and administrative goals of society, power disciplines and coerces our bodies so as to produce both docility and utility. In opposition to Habermas's theory, I think that the focus on collective goals does not resolve the problem of coercion but only hides the problem with a language of legitimation.

## 2.2 Modern Pathologies and Lifeworld

In his analysis of power, Habermas argues that legitimate power has to be grounded in common convictions formed in unconstrained communication. The questions that I posed earlier are: what makes 'common convictions' possible? Why shall we expect agreement rather than disagreement in unconstrained communication? Habermas's concept of lifeworld can be seen as an attempt to answer these questions. Instead of looking into the forces that make consensus possible and asking to what extent they involve coercion, Habermas assumes from the beginning that lifeworld is a background of socio-cultural systems which serves the purpose of communicative action. From this perspective, the pathologies of modern societies are not conceived as being generated from the lifeworld, but rather from the external forces in

the economic and political systems. Habermas's analysis, I argue, produces a myth that the lifeworld is inherently unproblematic.

Part II discusses Habermas's diagnosis and explanation of the pathologies of modern societies. I shall first of all introduce his concept of lifeworld which is idealized and designed as a background that supports communicative action. Secondly, I shall present Habermas's view of rationalization in terms of "the uncoupling of system and lifeworld". Thirdly, Habermas's view of modern pathologies will be discussed. In particular, we shall see how he explains modern pathologies in terms of his thesis of "colonization of lifeworld". I shall close the discussion by making critical comments on Habermas's analysis.

### *Habermas's idealized concept of lifeworld*

The concept of lifeworld has been seen from the beginning as a supplement to the concept of communicative action. While the discourse model scrutinizes the conditions for the formation of *explicit* knowledge, for Habermas, the concept of lifeworld points to a background of *implicit* knowledge. In the model of rational discourse, Habermas reconstructs the conditions that are presupposed in communicative action which allow a redemption of validity claims, namely the truth claim and the normative claim of rightness. The discourse model points to the way in which explicit knowledge is formed: in theoretical discourse, which scrutinizes the truth claim, empirical-theoretical knowledge is obtained; in practical discourse, which scrutinizes the normative claim of rightness, moral-practical knowledge is obtained. Nevertheless, Habermas says, in the analysis, "the role of implicit knowledge is not given its due" (Habermas, 1991:335). The cooperative process of interpretation, he states, has to assume the existence of a background of implicit knowledge, without which it is doubtful if a consensus is possible at all. Habermas considers lifeworld in terms of this background of implicit knowledge.

Habermas refers to lifeworld as a totality of socio-cultural facts that serves as a cognitive reference system for communicative action. It is defined as a matrix of culture, society and personality. Corresponding to each of these components, one finds processes of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization. Instead of seeing power and pathologies as generated in these processes, Habermas constructs an idealized lifeworld in which each of the components of lifeworld only serves the purpose of communicative action. He defines the components of lifeworld, namely culture, society and personality, in this way:

I use the term *culture* for the stock of knowledge from which participants in communication supply themselves with interpretations as they come to an understanding about something in the world. I use the term *society* for the legitimate orders through which participants regulate their memberships in social groups and thereby secure solidarity. By *personality* I understand the competences that make a subject capable of speaking and acting, that put him in a position to take part in processes of reaching understanding and thereby to assert his own identity. (Habermas, 1987:138)

In other words, culture, society and personality are seen as a background of competences and implicit knowledge that enables individuals to participate in the process of reaching understanding in communicative action. Lifeworld is a concept delimited for Habermas's own theoretical purpose.

According to Habermas, on the one hand, the components of lifeworld provide the inputs for communicative action; on the other hand, communicative action is the medium through which culture, society and personality are reproduced. Habermas writes that in coming to an understanding about the situation, participants stand in a cultural tradition that at once they use and renew; in coordinating their action by way of intersubjectively recognizing validity claims, they are at once relying on membership of social groups and strengthening the integration of these groups; when interacting with a competent reference person, the growing child internalizes the value orientations of the group and acquires generalized



capacities for action. Put in another way, Habermas is stating that, under the aspect of mutual understanding, communicative action serves to transmit and renew cultural knowledge; under the aspect of action coordination, communicative action contributes to social integration and solidarity; under the aspect of socialization, communicative action serves the formation of personal identities (Habermas, 1987:137).

In this sense, Habermas portrays an internal relation between lifeworld and communicative action in which they are linked to each other in a circular relation: lifeworld produces communicative action (as it provides the background inputs that make communicative action possible) and communicative action reproduces lifeworld. As communicative action is seen as internally connected to reason, so too, it is argued, is lifeworld. In the discussion of the rationalization processes, Habermas produces a concept of rationalized lifeworld.

Habermas views rationalization in terms of a process in which structural differentiation takes place between the components of lifeworld. Instead of the existence of a mythical worldview -- which is spread over all the social structures and tightly bound up with daily routines -- social institutions, legitimate orders and the formation of personality are gradually uncoupled from the world-views. Corresponding to the differentiation of culture, society and personality, Habermas says, there is a differentiation of form and content. On the cultural level, traditions separate off from the concrete contents of worldviews and shrink to formal elements like world-concepts, communication presuppositions, argumentation procedures, and so forth. At the level of society, principles of legal order and of morality are not tied to particular contexts and are established in a more abstract way. On the level of personality, the cognitive structures acquired in socialization are detached from the concrete contents of cultural knowledge, and hence the objects in connection with which the formal competences can be exercised become more variable (Habermas, 1987:146).

Habermas sees that in the structural differentiation, ~~the~~ communicative practice is no longer linked to an ascribed normative consensus, but rather to

the rationality potential of communicative action, to a consensus which is based on the force of the better argument, the force of reason. As he puts it,

the further the structural components of the lifeworld and the processes that contribute to maintaining them get differentiated, the more interaction contexts come under the conditions of rationally motivated mutual understanding, that is, of consensus formation that rests in the end on the authority of the better argument. (Habermas 1987:145)

Habermas produces a concept of rationalized lifeworld in which culture, society and personality are all connected to the rationality potential of communicative action. According to this concept of rationalized lifeworld, Habermas sees that on the cultural level, traditions are under continuous reflective revision; at the level of society, legitimate orders are dependent upon formal procedures for positing and justifying norms; on the level of the personality system, an abstract ego identity is continuously stabilized through self-reflection and self-steering (Habermas, 1987:146).

With such an idealized concept, Habermas portrays lifeworld as inherently unproblematic and free from power. Seeing that pathologies such as a loss of meaning and freedom are widespread in the lifeworld, Habermas maintains that the lifeworld is not accountable for them. He would rather explain the pathologies in terms of the effects of systemic mechanisms. In order to understand modern pathologies, Habermas thinks that we need to consider the rationalization process in terms of "the uncoupling of system and lifeworld". This uncoupling, in his view, later develops into an intrusion of the system mechanisms into lifeworld.

### *The uncoupling of system and lifeworld*

Habermas sees that the rationalization process witnesses an "uncoupling between system and lifeworld". That is, as a result of processes of

differentiation, the lifeworld which is at first coextensive with the system gets cut down into a subsystem. While the economic and the political subsystems, or what Habermas calls the system, are responsible for material reproduction, the lifeworld is now responsible for symbolic reproduction. From the system perspective, the interchange between the lifeworld and the system is considered as a kind of mutual influence. Nevertheless, Habermas thinks that the system perspective is not adequate in capturing the effects of the system media on the lifeworld and he would rather emphasize an internal perspective of the lifeworld.

From a system perspective, the thesis of "uncoupling of system and lifeworld" means a differentiation between the subsystems of a larger system. While each of the subsystems are specialized in a certain function, there are interchanges between the subsystems so that each is under the influence of the other subsystems. From this perspective, Habermas talks about a "mediatization" of the lifeworld. It refers to "'interference' phenomena that arise when system and lifeworld have become differentiated from one another to such an extent that they can exert mutual influence upon on another" (Habermas, 1987:186). For instance, Habermas elaborates, economic and political subsystems are linked to the lifeworld via institutions of civil and public law. The market economy is institutionalized via the bourgeois private law and the political state is institutionalized via the authority of public office. The institutionalization allows the mutual influence between the system and the lifeworld. On the one hand, the system is subjected to the normative restrictions of the lifeworld, and on the other hand, the lifeworld is modified according to the systemic constraints of material reproduction (Habermas, 1987:185).

Nevertheless, in order to understand the effects of the structural differentiation on the lifeworld, Habermas thinks that we need to adopt an internal perspective of it. From this perspective, one can see that system media, namely, money and power, work through the action orientation of people and take the place of communicative action in the role of action coordination. According to Habermas, the structural features of system media



enable them to bypass the process of consensus formation in action coordination. In the case of money, he elaborates, the standard situation is defined by the process of exchanging goods. Participants have clear interest positions -- to optimize their own economic interests. The money code can schematize one's responses in such a way as to either accept or reject another's offer to exchange. Through the money code, the parties can reciprocally condition the other's response without relying on the cooperative process presupposed by communicative action. What is expected is thus an objectivating attitude and a rational orientation toward action consequences (Habermas, 1987:264).

Similarly, Habermas argues, the structural features of the power code enable it to replace the role of communicative action. For the power code can schematize one's response either to submit to or oppose the command of the one in power. As the one in power can apply sanctions when facing disobedience, he can condition one's response without relying on his willingness to cooperate. Again, the result is an objectivating attitude and a rational orientation toward action consequences (Habermas, 1987:268). In contrast to communicative action, which coordinates action on the basis of rational consensus, Habermas says:

media such as money and power attach to empirical ties; they encode a purposive-rational attitude toward calculable amounts of value and make it possible to exert generalized, strategic influence on the decisions of other participants while bypassing processes of consensus-oriented communication. (Habermas, 1987:183)

With an example of bureaucratic organizations, Habermas illustrates how, with an uncoupling of system and lifeworld, system media replace the role of communicative action in action coordination. In modern societies, he writes, economic and political subsystems emerge as formally organized domains. Economic production is organized as private enterprises; public administration is organized as public bureaucracies. Habermas argues that these bureaucratic organizations, steered by media of money and power, "sheer off from lifeworld contexts and congeal into a kind of norm-free

sociality... They become peculiarly indifferent to culture, society, and personality" (Habermas, 1987:304). Nevertheless, as we shall see, these organizations do not really congeal into a kind of norm-free sociality. Neither are they really indifferent to lifeworld contexts in general. Instead they are indifferent to communicative action and to Habermas's idealized concept of lifeworld.

Habermas argues that bureaucratic organizations are peculiarly indifferent to lifeworld contexts, namely personality, culture and society (Habermas, 1987:308-9). Regarding the indifference between bureaucratic organizations and personality, he claims that organizations render themselves independent from members' own dispositions and goals, and from their private life-contexts. Only those motives, value orientations and performances which are functionally necessary are viewed as relevant. Through the medium of money, that is, in the form of wages, bonuses, pensions and so forth, economic organizations secure the necessary motivations. From Habermas's description, however, it is not clear if bureaucratic organizations are indifferent to personality as a whole. It seems that they still require the personality system to provide relevant motivations. Nevertheless, they may not require the kind of personality defined by Habermas's idealized concept of lifeworld, that is, an abstract ego identity which is stabilized through self-reflection and self-steering.

Likewise, bureaucratic organizations are not indifferent to culture as a whole. Instead, they instrumentalize culture for their own purposes. Habermas says that there is an indifference between organizations and culture. Cultural traditions are treated as ideologies that would restrict organizations' sovereign exercise of their competence to shape their own programs. Hence organizations usually adopt ideological neutrality. Nevertheless, in case of legitimation needs, organizations may convert traditions as raw materials for purposes of ideology planning. In this case, cultural traditions are instrumentalized for certain purposes, and for Habermas, they are robbed of their binding power which, according to his theory, is based on the rational consensus achieved in communicative action.

According to Habermas, the indifference of organizations toward society is referred to their "neutralizing the normative background of informal, customary, morally regulated contexts of action". He states that in pre-rationalized societies, social labor and political domination are normatively or morally regulated; in modern societies, they are institutionalized via positive law. Modern law is uncoupled from ethical motives, and functions as a means for demarcating areas of legitimating choice for private legal persons and fields of legal competence for office-holders. Therefore, in addition to the instrumentalization of culture and personality, Habermas sees an elimination of moral-practical elements in bureaucratic organizations.

Not only are bureaucratic organizations indifferent to the lifeworld that Habermas has in mind, they are also indifferent to the communication practice that Habermas formulates in the concept of communicative action. As Habermas points out, there are still processes of communication, otherwise social relations within the organizations could not be sustained, nor would the realization of organizational goals be possible. Nevertheless, while "interactions are still connected via the mechanism of mutual understanding", Habermas says, "members of organizations act communicatively only with reservation. They know they can have recourse to formal regulations, not only in exceptional but in routine cases; there is no necessity for achieving consensus by communicative action" (Habermas, 1987:310-11). As the communication practice in organizations has recourse to formal regulations, the role of communicative action is replaced.

Therefore, Habermas contends, system media no longer only achieve effects through <sup>the</sup> latent functional interconnection of action, as a system-functionalist may see, but rather work through the action orientation of people. This is why he thinks the system perspective has to be supplemented with the internal perspective of the lifeworld. From the internal perspective of lifeworld, one sees that bureaucratic organizations in political and economic systems are steered by system media which bypass processes of consensus formation in action coordination.



One might say that system media of money and power now take on the role of social integration; nevertheless, Habermas's conception of lifeworld does not allow this conclusion. He sees that lifeworld is internally related to communicative action. It is only through communicative action that lifeworld is reproduced. The role of communicative action is justified in terms of a universal interest of humankind that is grounded in one of the fundamental conditions of our existence--language. From this perspective, he states, it is doubtful whether integrative operations could be converted from the mechanism of reaching understanding in language to systemic mechanisms without a transformation of anthropologically deep-seated structures (Habermas, 1987:312). According to his theory of communicative action and lifeworld, Habermas does not consider system media as new mechanisms of social integration, but rather as an intervention of system integration into the very forms of social integration, as a "structural violence" done to the lifeworld (Habermas, 1987:187). The mutual influence between lifeworld and system that is perceived from the system perspective can develop into a destructive influence on the lifeworld. Habermas considers the destructive influence in terms of his thesis of "colonization of lifeworld".

### *Colonization of lifeworld*

According to Habermas, system mechanisms replace the role of communicative action not only in bureaucratic organizations, but also in the domains that are dependent on mutual understanding as the basis of action coordination. It is in the latter sense that Habermas refers to a colonization of lifeworld.<sup>5</sup> Habermas says:

in the end, systemic mechanisms suppress forms of social integration even in those areas where a consensus-dependent coordination of action cannot be replaced, that

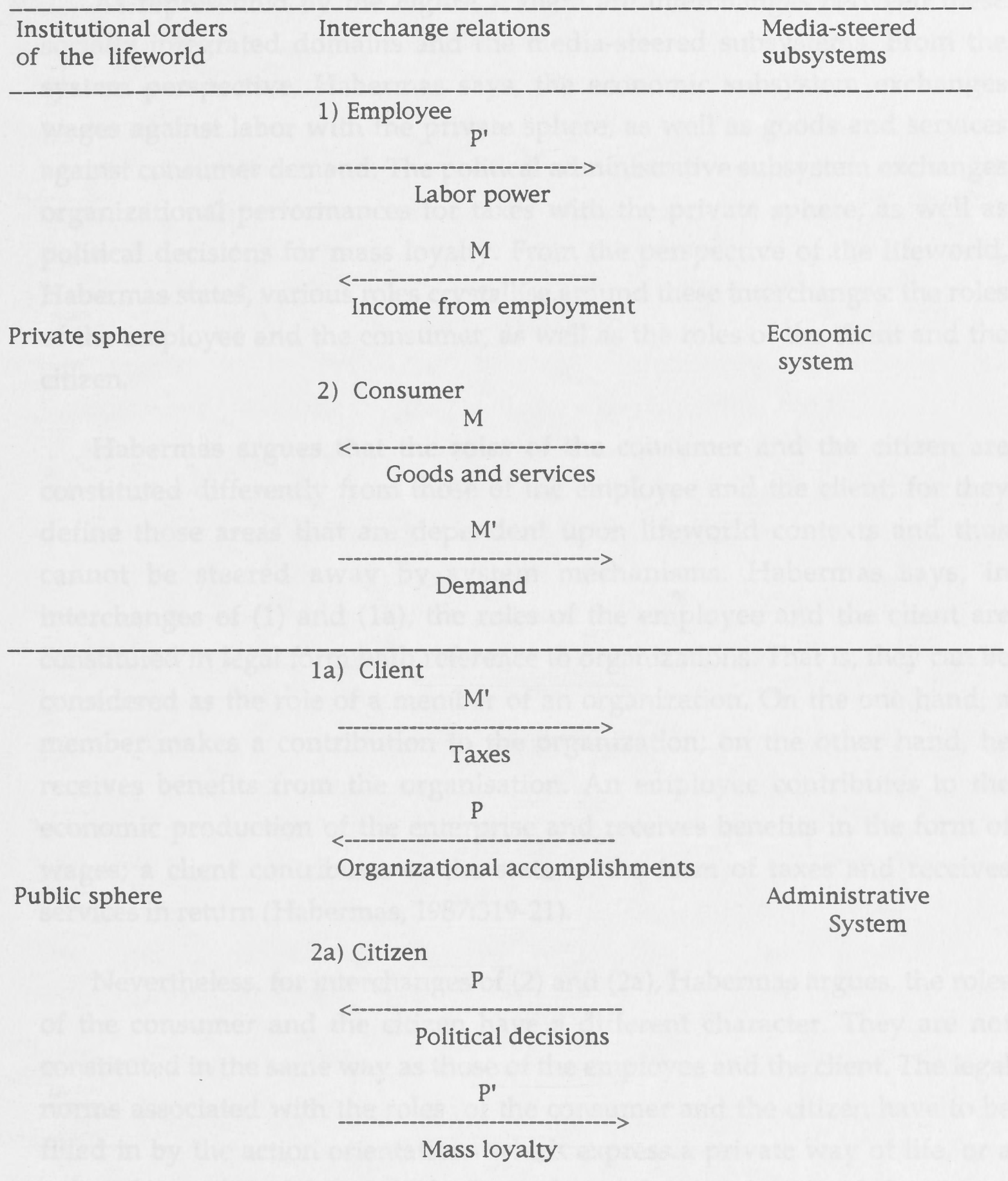
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<sup>5</sup> See White, 1988, pp.107-15; for a systematic elaboration of Habermas's thesis "colonization of lifeworld".

is, where the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld is at stake. In these areas, the mediatization of the lifeworld assumes the form of a colonization. (Habermas, 1987:196)

The colonization thesis hence presupposes certain domains as dependent upon communicative action. Habermas draws a boundary between these domains and those which can be steered by system media. For Habermas, the economic and political subsystems are domains to be steered by system media, whereas the private spheres (connected with family, neighbourhood, voluntary associations) as well as public spheres (for both private persons and citizens) are domains which are dependent upon communicative action for action coordination. Habermas seeks to show how the latter domains are colonized by the forces generated from the former domains. Nevertheless, as I shall point out in the discussion, it is not clear whether a demarcation between these two domains, one inherently linked to system mechanisms, the other inherently linked to mechanism of mutual understanding, is at all possible. Nor is it clear if such a demarcation is desirable.

Habermas writes that in modern societies, state and economy are the subsystems differentiated out from the lifeworld via the media of power and money. Against those areas that are systematically integrated, socially integrated areas take the shape of private and public spheres. The institutional core of the private sphere is the nuclear family, which specializes in socialization. The institutional core of the public sphere comprises communicative networks like the press and mass media. It allows for the reproduction of culture as well as the formation of public opinion. The public sphere is important for the generation of legitimation for power (Habermas, 1987:318-19).



M = MONEY MEDIUM ; P = POWER MEDIUM

Figure 1. Interchange between lifeworld and system (Habermas, 1987:320. With modifications).



As represented by the Figure 1, there are interchanges between these socially integrated domains and the media-steered subsystems. From the system perspective, Habermas says, the economic subsystem exchanges wages against labor with the private sphere, as well as goods and services against consumer demand. The political administrative subsystem exchanges organizational performances for taxes with the private sphere, as well as political decisions for mass loyalty. From the perspective of the lifeworld, Habermas states, various roles crystallise around these interchanges: the roles of the employee and the consumer, as well as the roles of the client and the citizen.

Habermas argues that the roles of the consumer and the citizen are constituted differently from those of the employee and the client; for they define those areas that are dependent upon lifeworld contexts and thus cannot be steered away by system mechanisms. Habermas says, in interchanges of (1) and (1a), the roles of the employee and the client are constituted in legal form with reference to organizations. That is, they can be considered as the role of a member of an organization. On the one hand, a member makes a contribution to the organization; on the other hand, he receives benefits from the organisation. An employee contributes to the economic production of the enterprise and receives benefits in the form of wages; a client contributes to the state in the form of taxes and receives services in return (Habermas, 1987:319-21).

Nevertheless, for interchanges of (2) and (2a), Habermas argues, the roles of the consumer and the citizen have a different character. They are not constituted in the same way as those of the employee and the client. The legal norms associated with the roles of the consumer and the citizen have to be filled in by the action orientations which express a private way of life, or a cultural or political form of life. The roles of the consumer and the citizen refer to prior self-formative processes in which preferences, value orientations and attitudes have taken shape. These action orientations, Habermas argues, cannot be "bought" or "collected" in the sense of what an organization does to its members. Instead they are developed in relation to processes of

socialization and socio-cultural integration of the lifeworld. Habermas contends that it is in this sense that we can talk about the autonomy of the consumer and the sovereignty of the citizen. As the action orientations of these roles are rooted in the private and public spheres, Habermas states, they are tied to the lifeworld contexts and the role of communicative action cannot be taken over by steering media in the subsystems (Habermas, 1987:321-2).

According to Habermas, the forces of monetarization and bureaucratization require all these roles to go through an abstraction process in order to adapt to the regulation of the steering media. For the role of the employee, concrete work activities have to be abstracted into labor power in order to be exchanged for wages; for the role of consumer, use-value orientations have to be transformed into consumer preferences; for the role of the citizen, public opinion and collective expressions of will have to be transformed into mass loyalty. In the case of the client, Habermas thinks that the reification effect of abstraction is more typical. He argues that within the relationship of clients to the administration of the welfare state, "elements of a private way of life and a cultural-political form of life get split off from the symbolic structures of the lifeworld through the monetary redefinition of goals, relations and services, life-spaces and life-times, and through the bureaucratization of decisions, duties and rights" (Habermas, 1987: 322). For him, this is a typical example of colonization since forces of monetarization and bureaucratization have invaded the domains of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization.

By "colonization of lifeworld", Habermas means the phenomenon that the imperatives of subsystems make their way into the lifeworld, like colonial masters coming into a tribal society and forcing a process of assimilation upon it (Habermas, 1987:355). In other words, the forces of monetarization and bureaucratization not only transform the economic and political subsystems, but also turn back destructively upon the lifeworld domains and force an assimilation upon them. Habermas explains modern pathologies in terms of his thesis "colonization of lifeworld".

Habermas argues that modern pathologies are a result of the forces of monetarization and bureaucratization invading the domains of lifeworld, namely the private and the public spheres. He states that the effect of monetarization in the private sphere is obvious. As the private life-forms of the consumer and the employee are subject to the imperatives of <sup>the</sup> economic system, communicative practice is one-sidedly rationalized into <sup>the</sup> utilitarian way. Consumerism, possessive individualism, motives of performance and competition, hedonism and so forth gain strength. In the public sphere, Habermas argues, bureaucratization disempowers spontaneous opinion formation and uncouples political decision from the lifeworld contexts. Practical questions are transformed into technical questions (Habermas, 1987:325). He concludes that with monetarization and bureaucratization of everyday life in both private and public spheres, the moral-practical elements are driven out from these spheres. This results in problems of motivation and orientation (or a loss of meaning), problems of legitimation and cultural impoverishment (Habermas, 1987:322-7).

In delineating these two domains, one inherently linked to system mechanisms, the other inherently linked to the mechanism of mutual understanding, Habermas seeks to show how the latter domain is colonized by the imperatives of the former domain. Modern pathologies are explained in terms of this colonization. Nevertheless, the demarcation that Habermas draws between the domains of system and lifeworld is not without problems.

First of all, it tends to exaggerate the differences and occlude the similarities between the domains of system and lifeworld. As Fraser points out from a feminist perspective, the household, which Habermas considers as a domain of lifeworld, is actually like the paid workplace, a site of labor. Moreover, in the paid workplace, women are assigned to feminine, service-oriented occupations, the same as they are assigned to in the household. Lastly, in both the spheres of the household and the paid workplace, women are subordinated to men. By characterizing the family as a domain of socially integrated symbolic reproduction, and on the other hand the paid workplace as a domain of system-integrated material reproduction, Fraser argues,



Habermas's theory fails to recognize the labor of childcare and housework in the family. Likewise it fails to focus on the problems of sexual segregation in the workplace as well as women's subordination in both spheres (Fraser, 1985b:107). In this sense, I contend, the problem of Habermas's demarcation of the domains of lifeworld and system is not only to do with the difficulty or impossibility of drawing a boundary; it is also a matter of desirability for it hides the problems within the domain of lifeworld.

Habermas, of course, does not deny the problems of power and instrumental-strategic action in the domains of lifeworld. Nevertheless, he tends to represent the domains of lifeworld as inherently innocent and unproblematic. The problems are hence seen as a result of invasion by some alien forces. This representation, as feminist studies show, is mistaken. From Habermas's perspective, the male-headed, nuclear family is seen as having only an extrinsic and incidental relation to system mechanisms of money and power; nevertheless, from a feminist perspective, empirical analyses of familial decision-making, handling of finances and wife-battering show that families are thoroughly permeated with the media of money and power. They are sites of egocentric, strategic and instrumental calculation as well as sites of usually exploitative exchange of labor and sex. Furthermore, they are frequently sites of coercion and violence (Fraser, 1985b:107). Moreover, the public sphere, too, is not a domain inherently free from power. Instead it is a domain dominated by men, for its requirement of abilities of articulation and argumentation discourages women's participation. Instead of an orientation to collective will, the opinion formed or expressed in the public sphere often reflects a male point of view.

From a feminist perspective, the private and public spheres are far from a domain of mutual understanding; they are rather a domain which has its own problems of domination and repression. Moreover, as Fraser points out, Habermas's thesis of colonization of lifeworld assumes that the vector of motion is from system to lifeworld and not vice versa (Fraser, 1985:125). The feminist perspective, however, shows us that it could be women's subordination in the lifeworld which leads to problems in the system domain.

For instance, problems like sexual segregation at work and male dominance in the political-administrative institutions are actually rooted in the private sphere. Therefore, rather than imagine the problem of power in terms of a vector from the system to the lifeworld, one should be aware of the permeation of power in both spheres; and if there were a vector, it should be seen as channelling influence not only from system to lifeworld, but also from lifeworld to system.

### Conclusion

In sum, Habermas's analysis of power is preoccupied with how to distinguish legitimate power from illegitimate power. This differentiation, for him, is also a differentiation between reason and force. Legitimate power is one which is connected to reason, whereas illegitimate power is one which is connected to force and implies the possibility of coercion. Habermas suggests that in order for power to be regarded as legitimate, it must be grounded in communicative action. In discussing how to ground power in communicative action, I point out, he produces two distinct versions of communicative concept of power, and both of them, I argue, are far from successful in dealing with the problems of force and coercion.

Habermas maintains that in an instrumental-strategic relation, power means the ability within a social relationship to assert one's will over others despite opposition. The only alternative to this kind of coercion, he claims, is free agreement among participants. Hence he produces an earlier version of communicative action which considers legitimate power as arising only in free agreement. Habermas believes that by conceiving of power as a kind of communicative action, he has successfully separated legitimate power from instrumental-strategic action and from the coercion implied in instrumental-strategic action. Nevertheless, I argue, since he insists on not only an understanding but an agreement among participants, this agreement

presupposes a high degree of homogeneity among participants and, in this way, he brings back the possibility of coercion that is required for achieving such kind of homogeneity.

In contrast to the above version of communicative concept of power, Habermas takes up Parsons' theory and produces a different version of communicative concept of power. Though he still argues that legitimate power is based on communicative action, nevertheless, he does not conceive of power as a kind of communicative action but rather as purposive-instrumental action which serves the realization of collective goals. While he supplements Parsons' concept of power with a dimension of communicative action by arguing that collective goals are to be determined in rational discourse, nevertheless, as he noticed in the earlier discussion of the communicative concept of power, Parsons' concept of power requires force to play a counterpart and implies the possibility of coercion. Now in focusing on the question of what legitimates power, Habermas hides the problems of force and coercion in a language of legitimation. He produces a myth that power is safe while after all power, which is to do with disposition over means of sanctions and an instrumentalization of agreement for realization of collective goals, is no less dangerous than before.

In his analysis of pathologies of modern societies, Habermas produces another myth that lifeworld is inherently innocent and free from power. He constructs an idealized concept of lifeworld based on which modern pathologies are criticized. The major flaw of this idealized concept of lifeworld, I suggest, lies not only in its counterfactual character, but in its calling for an explanation of modern pathologies elsewhere than the lifeworld. Habermas's thesis, "colonization of lifeworld", can be read in this sense. According to the thesis, modern pathologies are explained in terms of an intrusion of the external forces of monetarization and bureaucratization into the lifeworld. They are conceived in terms of a forced assimilation of the lifeworld, a colonization of the inherently innocent lifeworld.

Habermas's argument implies that the lifeworld domains, namely, the private and public spheres, are inherently unproblematic. Nevertheless, in



contrast to what Habermas assumes, feminist studies show that the private and public spheres are themselves permeated with problems of power and coercion. The nuclear, male-headed family is a site of egocentric, strategic and instrumental calculation, as well as a site of usually exploitative exchange of labor and sex, and frequently a site of coercion and violence. Moreover, the public sphere, too, is not as innocent as assumed. It is very often a sphere dominated by men. Habermas's demarcation between the domains of system and lifeworld is hence not only questioned in terms of its plausibility but its desirability, for it hides all the problems of the private and public spheres of the lifeworld.

According to Habermas's thesis, "colonization of lifeworld", pathologies are diagnosed in terms of a vector of motion from the system to the lifeworld. That is, it conceives of pathologies as a result of the invasion of forces from the economic and political systems into the lifeworld. It fails to focus on problems like sexual segregation of workplace and male domination of political-administrative institutions, which all have their root in the problem of women's subordination in the private sphere of lifeworld.

If the thesis of colonization of lifeworld is problematic, then the resistance strategy that it informs--decolonization--is bound to be fruitless.<sup>6</sup> Instead of standing on the side of lifeworld, and fighting against or pushing back the influence of system mechanisms on the lifeworld, one needs to be reminded of the pervasiveness of the problems of power, and to fight against power from all sides. Foucault's analysis of power, I suggest, has the advantage of reminding us of the danger of power and the pervasiveness of power in all our life spheres. Moreover, instead of hiding the problem of coercion in a language of legitimation, Foucault's work brings the problem to the fore. From Foucault's perspective, a lot of Habermas's concepts are exposed as myths and misguided comfort. In the second part of the thesis, I shall consider the challenges of Foucault's work for Habermas's theory.

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the inadequacies of decolonization as an emancipatory solution for women's subordination and oppression; see Fraser, 1985b, p.127.

## Chapter 3

### DISCIPLINARY POWER AND ITS CHALLENGE TO HABERMAS'S THEORY

#### PART II

### FOUCAULT'S CHALLENGE TO HABERMAS'S THEORY

Habermas holds that in an instrumental-strategic relation, power means the possibility of coercion. He asks: how can we have an image of power which is legitimate and excludes the possibility of coercion. In formulating a communicative concept of power, as discussed in Chapter 2, he thinks that he has provided a secure ground for power in communicative action. I argue that he produces a myth that power is safe while power, as he understands it, which is to do with disposition over means of sanctions and an instrumentalization of agreement for realization of collective goals, is no less dangerous than before. Moreover, I point out that Habermas's diagnosis of modern pathologies produces another myth—that the lifeworld is inherently unproblematic—while feminist studies show that the family, a central institution of the lifeworld, is itself permeated with problems of domination and coercion.

Instead of focusing on the question "what legitimates power?", I contend that what we need is an approach which reminds us of the danger of power and the ever present possibility of coercion; and instead of assuming that the lifeworld is an innocent sphere, we need an approach which reminds us of the pervasiveness of power in all the spheres of our lives. Foucault's work, I suggest, could be read in terms of its advantages in pointing out these characteristics of power. In the second part of the thesis, I shall elaborate on the insights of Foucault's work, and show in what ways it challenges Habermas's critique of power.

## Chapter 3

### DISCIPLINARY POWER AND ITS CHALLENGE TO HABERMAS'S THEORY

Habermas holds that in an instrumental-strategic relation, power means the possibility within a social relationship to assert one's will over others despite opposition. Seeing the likelihood of coercion, Habermas asks: how can we have an image of power which is legitimate and excludes the possibility of coercion. In formulating a communicative concept of power, as discussed in Chapter 2, he thinks that he has provided a secure ground for power in communicative action. I argue that he produces a myth that power is safe while power, as he understands it, which is to do with disposition over means of sanctions and an instrumentalization of agreement for realization of collective goals, is no less dangerous than before. Moreover, I point out that Habermas's diagnosis of modern pathologies produces another myth--that the lifeworld is inherently unproblematic--while feminist studies show that the family, a central institution of the lifeworld, is itself permeated with problems of domination and coercion.

Instead of focusing on the question "what legitimates power?", I contend that what we need is an approach which reminds us of the danger of power and the ever present possibility of coercion; and instead of assuming that the lifeworld is an innocent sphere, we need an approach which reminds us of the pervasiveness of power in all the spheres of our lives. Foucault's work, I suggest, could be read in terms of its advantages in pointing out these characteristics of power. In the second part of the thesis, I shall elaborate on the insights of Foucault's work, and show in what ways it challenges Habermas's critique of power.



In this chapter, I argue that Foucault provides us with an alternative approach to Habermas's critique of power. Habermas's approach, I suggest, could be understood as a juridico-discursive mode of analysis which Foucault seeks to surpass. The juridico-discursive approach represents power as law which prohibits and negates. As power is conceived as negative, it has to be subjected to the rules of right. When power is exercised within the limits and operates according to the principle of legitimation, it is considered as lawful, as legitimate. The primary task, therefore, is to draw limits and boundaries, to limit power to its own domain, to submit power to the rules of right. Habermas, who is preoccupied with drawing a demarcation between legitimate and illegitimate power, between lifeworld and system, provides us with a juridico-discursive mode of analysis of power.

For Habermas, any critique of power must provide a normative principle for the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power. He devotes his efforts to formulating a communicative concept of power in order to provide a normative basis for it. Power which is grounded in communicative action is considered as legitimate, whereas power which is not grounded in communicative action can be questioned in terms of its legitimacy and people are right to resist. Habermas criticizes Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power in terms of a lack of such a normative principle. He asks how Foucault can answer the question "why fight"? if he does not ground his critique in any normative principles. Why should we muster any resistance at all against this disciplinary power? Why ought domination be resisted (Habermas, 1987a:284)?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Habermas understands that Foucault sees disciplinary power as domination that has to be resisted. This understanding, I contend, has some evidence in Foucault's work *Discipline and Punish*. As pointed out by Hindess, Foucault fails to distinguish between domination and power at this stage in his work (1996:114; 162, note 5). Foucault seems to regard discipline as oppressive regimes that bring about docile bodies through coercion. According to Pasquino (1993:79), Foucault came to realize that this earlier treatment of power 'threatened to lead to an extremist denunciation of power -- envisaged according to a repressive model' (reproduced in Hindess, 1996:98). This one-sided, rejectionist understanding of discipline overlooks the fact that self-discipline, for example, by means of meditation, can be a practice that enables individuals to overcome or control the external effects of domination

Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power, I suggest, should not be considered from the perspective of a juridico-discursive model. On the contrary, we should read it in terms of an alternative approach--a strategic model--to the juridico-discursive mode of analysis. Rather than ask what legitimates power or how to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power, Foucault's strategic model raises the question how the effects of power are produced and maintained. From this perspective, Foucault sees that the existence of power is not ensured by rights, but rather by techniques. That is, the effects of power take place in the body through the employment of a wide range of disciplinary techniques. These techniques coerce our body, manipulate its elements, its gestures and its behaviour. In light of Foucault's strategic model, the problem of disciplinary coercion is brought to the fore. Moreover, Foucault's analysis of the spread of disciplinary power demonstrates that no spheres can be privileged as the basis of hope. In contrast to Habermas's separating out an innocent sphere of lifeworld, Foucault shows the pervasiveness of disciplinary power and the permeation of power in all the spheres of our lives.

This chapter argues that from the perspective of Foucault's strategic model, not only are some of Habermas's conclusion<sup>about</sup> power and modern pathologies questioned, but his mode of analysis, which preoccupied with a demarcation between legitimate and illegitimate power, between system and lifeworld, is challenged. Before discussing the insights of Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power, I shall first consider the affinities between Habermas's critique and the juridico-discursive mode of analysis.

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upon themselves. Foucault's later studies on the Greek practice of self-discipline demonstrate this possibility; see Foucault, 1987; 1990.

### 3.1 Habermas's Theory and the Juridico-Discursive Mode of Analysis

Foucault says that we must break free of the juridico-discursive mode in our analysis of power.

Whether desire is this or that, in any case one continues to conceive of it in relation to a power that is always juridical and discursive, a power that has its central place in the enunciation of the law. One remains attached to a certain image of power-law, of power-sovereignty, which was traced out by the theoreticians of right and the monarchic institution. It is this image that we must break free of, that is, of the theoretical privilege of law and sovereignty, if we wish to analyze power within the concrete and historical framework of its operation. We must construct an analytics of power that no longer takes law as a model and a code. (Foucault, 1979b:89-90)

The juridico-discursive model of power, as I shall elaborate in this section, has three characteristics: first, it represents power in the image of law, of prohibition or censorship; second, it privileges the theory of sovereignty; and third, it privileges the theory of right. Foucault constantly presents his analysis as a challenge to the juridico-discursive mode.<sup>2</sup> Habermas's theory, of course, does not correspond perfectly to Foucault's target of critique. Nevertheless, because of his preoccupation with the problematic of legitimacy, as well as his construction of a framework which defines the right and the domain of power, I regard Habermas's analysis as juridico-discursive. I shall first present Foucault's

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<sup>2</sup> Foucault says that the aim of the inquiries is to move toward an analytics of power which frees itself from a certain representation of power that he would term "juridico-discursive" (1979b:82). According to Foucault, the juridico-discursive mode represents power as law which prohibits and represses. "It is this conception that governs both the thematics of repression and the theory of law as constitutive of desire. See his discussion of the juridico-discursive conception of sex in 1979b, pp.82-90. For his discussion of the juridical notion of power which contains a reference to a theory of sovereignty and a theory of right, see 1980c, pp.92-108.



view on the juridico-discursive model of power, and then consider the affinities<sup>between</sup> Habermas's work and the juridico-discursive model of power.

### *Foucault: on the juridico-discursive mode*

According to Foucault (1979b:82-5), the juridico-discursive mode of analysis represents power in the form of law which merely refuses, prohibits, and says no. It is a power which resembles the biblical law "thou shalt not go near", "thou shalt not touch". The rule of prohibition, he states, is linked to repression, renunciation, and a denial of existence. Foucault illustrates it with an example of sex. Power affirms that such a thing, sex, is not permitted. The prohibition is linked to renunciation: power prevents it from being said; power denies its existence. Power, in the representation of law, is characterized by rejection, exclusion, refusal, blockage, concealment, or mask. This negative conception of power, Foucault states, assumes that power can do nothing but negate ; or if it ever produces, they are boundaries and limits. It places things in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden. It establishes the rule.

In Foucault's view, the juridico-discursive mode which represents power in the form of law privileges the theory of sovereignty. Despite criticisms of absolutist power as arbitrary and unlawful, Foucault argues, the history of the monarch actually went hand in hand with the system of law. A fundamental trait of Western monarchies was that they were constructed as the system of law. They expressed themselves through theories of law; they made their power work in the form of law. As seen in the old reproach that the Boulainvilliers directed at the French monarchy, the monarchy used the law and the jurists to do away with rights and bring down the aristocracy (Foucault, 1979b:87). Not only is the monarchical power represented in the form of law, other forms of sovereign power are represented in the same way. The association of

power-law with sovereignty has an implication for the juridico-discursive mode.

The emphasis on the category of sovereignty implies that power is attributed to an identifiable source. This does not require the sovereign to be a monarch. Instead it can be a conglomerate of persons and institutions vested with legislative powers. Nevertheless, the sovereignty image does require the source of power to be internally coherent, stable and identifiable.<sup>3</sup> While focusing on sovereignty, this mode of analysis does not overlook local power relations. Yet, when looking at local power relations, one tends to ask: "what is the source of power behind the multiplicity of local power relations?" In other words, it represents power in a way which flows from the centre and permeates to the base; which reproduces itself from top to bottom, down to the most molecular elements of society. This mode of analysis assumes that there is a uniformity of the apparatus. From top to bottom, in its overall decisions and in its capillary interventions, whatever the institutions on which it relies, it acts in a uniform and comprehensive manner; it operates according to the same form, varying only in scale (Foucault, 1980c:99; 1979b:84-5).

According to Foucault, side by side with the category of sovereignty is the category of right. "Right in the West is the King's right" (1980c:94). In Western societies, since medieval times, Foucault writes, it is the power of the monarchy that provides the focus around which legal thought has been elaborated. Studies have centred basically on the King, his rights, his power and its eventual limitations. The theory of right aims at imposing limits upon the sovereign, submitting it to the rules of right. It is within these limits that the power exercised is considered as legitimate. The principle of power-as-law in the juridico-discursive mode hence has a meaning other than the negative conception of power. It means that power has to be exercised within limits, power has to be operated according to rule. The boundary and the limit of power are to be defined and spelled

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. Cousins and Hussain, 1984, p.233-5.

out clearly. This image of power can be seen in the criticism of the eighteenth-century monarchy. Foucault writes, the power of the monarchy was condemned for its transgression of the limits, its constant overstepping of the legal framework and setting itself above the law. It assumed a pure and rigorous juridical system to which all mechanisms of power had to conform. There had to be no excesses, no irregularities of power. Power had to be exercised in the very form of the law (Foucault, 1979b:88). In the nineteenth century another criticism of the political institutions occurred. It was also based on the same image of power. Foucault writes, this time the criticism was directed against the legal system itself. It criticized the legal system as merely a way of exerting violence, of appropriating that violence for the benefit of the few, and of exploiting the injustices of domination under the cover of law. This type of criticism, in Foucault's words, "is still carried out on the assumption that, ideally and by nature, power must be exercised in accordance with a fundamental lawfulness" (Foucault, 1979b:88).

When power is exercised within its limits, it is considered as lawful, as legitimate. The setting of limits hence is at the same time the establishment of the right of power; the drawing of boundaries is at the same time the fixing of the legitimacy of power. Foucault says, "[t]he essential role of the theory of right, from medieval times onwards, was to fix the legitimacy of power; that is the major problem around which the whole theory of right and sovereignty is organized". Therefore, the theory of right not only seeks to impose limits; at the same time it tries "to show the nature of the juridical armoury that invested royal power, to reveal the monarch as the effective embodiment of sovereignty, to demonstrate that his power, for all that it was absolute, was exactly that which befitted his fundamental right" (Foucault, 1980c:95). Foucault reminds us that this establishment of the legitimate right of the sovereignty implies an establishment of the legal obligation to obey. Confronted with the power-law, the subject is obliged to obey (Foucault, 1980c:95; 1979b:95). The juridico-discursive mode hence presents to us a picture with a legitimate power on one side, and an obedient subject on the other.



In sum, the juridico-discursive model represents power in a negative way: it prohibits; it constrains. This power can be located in an identifiable source, whether it is the monarch in the past or the democratic sovereignty in modern societies. As power is constraining, one seeks to set limits and draw boundaries. The setting of limits and boundaries is also the establishment of the right of power and the obligation to obey. One must admit that Habermas does not have a simplistic negative conception of power; nevertheless, I argue, his analysis contains features which enable it to be regarded as juridico-discursive.

### *Habermas and the juridico-discursive mode*

I suggest that Habermas's analysis can be read as a juridico-discursive mode. Nevertheless, this does not mean that he has a simplistic, negative concept of power. In Habermas's view, power does not have to be conceived as repressive, or as a tool that serves sectional interests. Instead power can be productive and used to serve collective interests. He agrees with Parsons that power can be defined as the generalized capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations that are legitimized with reference to collective goals. In other words, power can be seen in terms of serving the realization of collective goals. Moreover, Habermas points out that power does not only ask for compliance but obligations; it is not only a matter of obedience to laws, but carrying out of duties (Habermas, 1987b:271). In this sense, Habermas's understanding of power is rather positive or productive. Instead of merely negating, power motivates performance; it produces performance of obligations.<sup>4</sup>

While seeing that power is productive, Habermas emphasizes that one cannot overlook the problems of power. For him, these problems include

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<sup>4</sup> This reveals a weakness in Foucault's discussion of the representation of power-law. When power is represented as law, it does not mean that power merely negates. The purpose of law is not only to negate and prohibit, but to motivate the performance of duties.

the asymmetrical character of power and the possibility of coercion in the exercise of power. Habermas says, in order to be used for collective goals, power has to be expressed in an organizational form, that is, power has to be organized in terms of hierarchical relations. Those who exercise power have to occupy a position in a hierarchy of a collective organization. The one in the higher position is to make binding decisions whereas the one in the subordinated position is to carry out the decisions. For Habermas, this asymmetrical character of power is a problem since the one in a higher position can deliver sanctions to those who disobey. In other words, those in a subordinate position are structurally disadvantaged because the one in a higher position can always cause harm to them when they disobey. This structural disadvantage can be exploited by the one in a higher position when he uses power for his own interests. Or this structural disadvantage can imply a problem of coercion when the one in a higher position imposes his own will over those in a subordinate position. Facing these problems of power, the step that Habermas takes is to propose a model that would eliminate the possibility of coercion. His effort in constructing such a model can be seen in terms of a search for a better model of legitimation.

For Habermas, the legitimization of power with reference to collective goals is not capable of resolving the problem of coercion. Power can be legitimated in the name of the collective goals while in reality serving particular interests and coercing individuals' will. Habermas, therefore, proposes a model of discourse according to which those affected by power are allowed to participate in the contest, discussion and determination of goals. It is to guarantee that the goals determined are collectively desired, that the formation of a collective will replaces the imposition of somebody's will over others, and that the orientation to collective interests replaces the domination of sectional interests. The discourse model, therefore, enables Habermas to come to the following conclusions: firstly, the problem of coercion is resolved, and thus one can have a power which is productive, noncoercive, and oriented to collective interests; secondly, as the possibility of coercion is eliminated, the problem of the asymmetrical character of power, though it cannot be eliminated, is

"offset" or "compensated" (Habermas, 1987:271). In relation to these conclusions, I shall highlight two points about Habermas's theory.

For Habermas, there can be a positive and a negative conception of power. From a positive conception, power is used for collective interests; power manifests collective will; power is noncoercive. From a negative conception, power is used for particular interests; power manifests a particular will; power is coercive. For Habermas, these two conceptions do not point to two different perspectives of looking at power, but rather two different categories of power. In other words, Habermas does not mean that one can see the same power from different perspectives: the productive aspect of power from the perspective of the positive conception and the repressive aspect of power from the perspective of the negative conception. Instead Habermas contends that there are two categories of power: one is positive, the other is negative. The problem for him is: how to specify the rules and conditions that separate one from the other; how to provide a model that separates the positive power from the negative power, the noncoercive power from the coercive power. This problem is based on the presupposition that such kind of separation is possible. Foucault, in contrast, provides an analysis of power that challenges this presupposition. Foucault shows that power is productive and at the same time coercive. This challenge will be discussed in Part II of this chapter.

Secondly, facing the asymmetrical character of power, the question that Habermas asks is: how can this problem be compensated? This question can be seen in terms of Habermas's concern about the problematic of legitimacy. When Habermas asks "how can the asymmetry of power be compensated", what he means is: despite the asymmetry, how can power still be recognized as legitimate, or what legitimates power? The pursuit of these questions reveals an affinity of Habermas's theory with the juridico-discursive model of power. From the beginning Habermas's theory is preoccupied with the question of how to distinguish legitimate power from illegitimate power. Now the asymmetry, for Habermas, does not necessarily render power illegitimate. He thinks that with reference to the



goals which are collectively desired and collectively determined, power can still be recognized as legitimate. The establishment of the legitimacy of power, as Foucault claims, is at the same time the establishment of the legal obligation to obey. In effect, by grounding power in communicative action, his theory is saying this: despite the problem of the asymmetry of power, power is legitimate and one is obliged to obey.

Habermas's analysis of system and lifeworld further reveals its affinity with the juridico-discursive mode. In taking up Parsons' conception of power as a medium of the political system, Habermas translates this abstract conception into a concrete, institutional concept of power. He locates power in the central political institutions, in the system of state administration. As what is presupposed in the theory of sovereignty, power is located and traced to an identifiable source: the modern administrative state. After locating power in the state, the domain of power has to be defined; the boundary between the domain of power and the other has to be drawn. According to Habermas, the role of power, being a system medium which regulates action on the basis of a purposive-instrumental orientation, has to be confined to the sphere of the political system. In contrast, communicative action, which is oriented to a consensual-discursive process, is responsible for action coordination in the sphere of lifeworld. In other words, Habermas draws a boundary between power and the political system on the one hand, and communicative action and lifeworld on the other. A transgression of the boundary is regarded as pathological. The pathologies of modern societies are explained as a consequence of the transgression of the boundary.

According to Habermas's thesis "colonization of the lifeworld", modern pathologies are conceived in terms of an intrusion of the system mechanisms into the domain of lifeworld. As discussed in Chapter 2, modern pathologies are seen as a result of the penetration of the medium of power into the sphere that requires communicative action as the mechanism of social integration. For instance, Habermas writes, the expansion of the role of experts and bureaucrats leads

to a suppression of the discussion or opinion formation in the public sphere. The role of a citizen is reduced to voting and individuals now relate to the state via the role of the client and on the basis of a purposive-instrumental orientation. For Habermas, this development cannot avoid pathological consequences, as revealed in problems like identity crisis and legitimation crisis. The solution, following naturally from the diagnosis, is a circumscription of the role of the mechanisms of power to the proper domain. That is, experts and bureaucrats still have their role in the political system, but communicative action has its role in the public sphere so that the decisions of experts and bureaucrats are guided by the discursive will. The diagnosis as well as the solution reveal a presupposition of the juridico-discursive mode: how to draw the limit and boundary of power so that its right is confined to a certain domain. In Habermas's theory, power belongs to the sphere of <sup>the</sup> political-administrative system whereas communicative action belongs to the sphere of lifeworld. The boundary is drawn. The right of power is spelled out. When the mechanisms of power intrude <sup>upon</sup> the sphere of communicative action, power is condemned.

### 3.2 Foucault's Analysis of Disciplinary Power and its Challenge to Habermas

Foucault says that we must break free of the juridico-discursive mode of analysis which represents power in the form of law. The juridico-discursive mode, he argues, fails to capture the new forms of power in modern western societies.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, I shall focus on one of these

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<sup>5</sup> Besides disciplinary power, Foucault discusses other modern forms of power. For instance, he says, the second form, namely the bio-power, formed somewhat later and focused on the species body, aims at regulatory control of the biological processes of the population including its propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity (Foucault, 1980a:139). In his "Governmentality" lecture, Foucault (1991) discusses the pastoral form of power in western societies, which operates through the metaphor of the shepherd and his flock. The shepherd's exercise of pastoral power over his flock is

modern forms of power--discipline--and see what kinds of challenge it poses for Habermas's theory. My focus on disciplinary power is intended to provide a parallel response to Habermas's criticism of Foucault which is based on his reading of Foucault's ideas of discipline.<sup>6</sup> I shall first summarize Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power and then discuss the ways in which it runs counter to Habermas's theory of power. I argue that Foucault's challenge lies not only in his providing an alternative account of modern power that Habermas's theory overlooks, but also in his presenting a mode of analysis which is different from the juridico-discursive mode.

### *Foucault: on disciplinary power*

Foucault writes that a new form of power emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which "centred on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into the systems of efficient and economic controls"(Foucault, 1979b:139). This power took the form of a disciplinary control over the body and its forces. It aims at imposing a relation of utility-docility upon the body, that is, a parallel increase in both the usefulness and the docility of the body. While previously there had been other forms of power which produced docile bodies, Foucault contends, this form of power was new in a number of ways. Firstly, in terms of the principle of utility. While asceticism also involved a disciplining of the body, its function was to achieve renunciations rather than increases of utility. Secondly, in terms of the

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based on a concern for the flock's welfare rather than its liberty. For a systematic and useful discussion of these different forms of power as well as Foucault's concepts of power, domination, and government, see Hindess, 1996, Chapter 5.

<sup>6</sup> Habermas's criticism of Foucault is mainly based on his reading of Foucault's ideas of discipline and power/knowledge. In this chapter, I focus on disciplinary power. In Chapter 4, I shall discuss Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge and see what kinds of challenge it has for Habermas.



principle of docility, this new form of power was different from slavery for it could now dispense with the costly and violent means of appropriation of bodies and yet still obtain as much utility. Thirdly, in terms of its bearing on the operations of the body, it is different from vassalage, which relied more on the products of labor and the ritual marks of allegiance (Foucault, 1979a:137). What guarantees a relation of utility-docility is the effects it has on the operations of the body.

According to Foucault, this new form of power can be represented in terms of a political anatomy of the body. "The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it". "What was then formed was ... a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour" (Foucault, 1979a:138). In order to ensure the meticulous control of the operations of the body, a series of disciplinary methods and techniques are employed. They operate according to a codification which partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement.

Firstly, consider spatial arrangement. In order to achieve a distribution of bodies in space, Foucault writes, discipline employs techniques like enclosure: the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself. Besides the great "confinement" of vagabonds and paupers, there were colleges and secondary schools, military barracks, workshops and factories. Take the factory as an example: the guardian only opened the gate in the morning for the return of workers to work and the gate was closed until the end of the day when workers finished work. The aim was to derive maximum advantage and to minimize interruptions to work. Nevertheless, Foucault elaborates, enclosure is neither constant, nor indispensable, nor sufficient for discipline. In order to control in a more flexible and detailed way, it requires the technique of partitioning. That is, each individual is distributed in a space so that each has his own place. Its aim is to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to interrupt dangerous communications, to be able to supervise the conduct of each individual at every moment. Besides achieving surveillance, the

distribution also aims at setting up useful communication and useful cooperation. In the workshop, the distribution is linked to the division of the production process. On the one hand, the spatial distribution ensures productivity; on the other hand, it enables the individual, his force, and each variable of his force--strength, promptness, skill, constancy--to be observed (Foucault, 1979a:141-5).

The method of partitioning, or spatial distribution reaches an ideal form in <sup>the</sup> Panopticon, which is intended by Bentham as the design of a prison. According to Foucault, the Panopticon is an architectural figure which <sup>serves to produce the effects of</sup> a gaze. It contains rings of cells encircling a central observation tower.<sup>7</sup> Each individual in this building can be seen and observed from the central tower. But the side walls of the cell prevent him from being seen or coming into contact with his companions. Hence "he is seen but he does not see". On the one hand, the invisibility breaks dangerous communication and guarantees order; on the other hand, the visibility induces a state of consciousness of being watched and produces the effects of ceaseless supervision. The inmate has the tower before his eyes. He does not know when exactly he is being watched, but he is sure that he may always be so. Hence the inmate is subjected to his own supervision. He is caught up in a power situation of which he himself is the bearer. The panoptic apparatus makes possible continuous and permanent surveillance, even it is discontinuous in action (Foucault, 1979a:200-1).

Besides the partitioning of space, disciplinary method also involves the partitioning of time. Foucault writes that the use of a time-table had been an old method found in monastic communities. It was then adopted

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<sup>7</sup> Foucault elaborates on the Panopticon as follows: "at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower ..." (1979a:200).

by schools, workshops and hospitals. But the discipline altered this method of temporal regulation by refining it. The division of time became a more minute division of time; the governing of activities was in more detail. Foucault illustrates the detailed partitioning of time with the following example:

At the last stroke of the hour, a pupil will ring the bell, and at the first sound of the bell all pupils will kneel, with their arms crossed and their eyes lowered. When the prayer has been said, the teacher will strike the signal once to indicate that the pupils should get up, a second time as a sign that they should salute Christ, a third that they should sit down. (Foucault, 1979a:150)

In the working place, there was likewise a detailed partitioning of time (Foucault, 1979a:150).<sup>8</sup> This detailed partitioning of time is to make sure of the quality of time used, that each minute is spent in a useful way, that a totally useful time is the result. In contrast to the old principle underlying the time-table of non-idleness, a negative principle that forbade the waste of time, Foucault says, the use of the time table is now for a positive economy. It makes possible an ever-growing use of time, an extraction of more available moments, and from each moment, ever more useful forces (Foucault, 1979a:154).

Nevertheless, in Foucault's view, what is more novel about the method of discipline is its partition of movements, its temporal elaboration of an act. He gives the example of the training of a marching troop, in which the body had to adjust to temporal imperatives, and there had to be a precision in the breakdown of gestures and movements.

The length of the short step will be a foot, that of the ordinary step, the double step and the marching step will be two feet, the whole measured from one heel to the next; as for the duration, that of the small step and the ordinary step will last one second, during which two

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<sup>8</sup> For example, if workers arrived later than a quarter of an hour after the ringing of the bell, or if any one of the companions was asked for during work and lost more than five minutes, their wages would be reduced in a corresponding rate. See Foucault, 1979, p.150.



double step would be performed; the duration of the marching step will be a little longer than one second. The oblique step will take one second; it will be at most eighteen inches from one heel to the next ... (Foucault, 1979a:151)

In contrast to the time-table which provides the general framework for an activity, it is a programme which assures the elaboration of the act itself, a programme that controls its development and its stages from the inside. Therefore, Foucault says, we do not only have time-tables that punctuate gestures, we have a web that constrains gestures and sustains them throughout their entire succession. "The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed" (Foucault, 1979a:151-2). These methods make possible a meticulous control of the operations of the body. They achieve an uninterrupted, constant coercion, a supervision over the process rather than the result of an activity.

*Disciplinary power as a form of power that Habermas's theory fails to capture*

For Habermas, the coercive power is to be separated from the noncoercive power; the productive power is to be separated from the negative power. His construction of the notion of communicative action, which links power to the formation of collective will and the attainment of collective interests, is intended to exclude the possibility of coercion. I argue that Habermas's theory fails to capture a modern form of power --discipline-- and the way it operates and brings about subjection.

Foucault's concept of disciplinary power requires the body to be the centre of attention. The body is the target of its control; the body is the object of power. "It is always the body that is at issue -- the body and its

forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission" (Foucault, 1979a:25). It is the body that is trained; it is the body that is forced to carry out the task. In order to be a useful body, it has to be a subjected body. The subjection, as shown by Foucault's analysis, may be obtained by violence or ideology, but very often it is obtained by subtle coercion.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, while the subjection is obtained in a way that is direct and physical, it does not have to involve violence. It uses neither weapons nor terror but more subtle instruments. On the other hand, while the coercion is subtle, it does not have to rely on mechanisms of ideologies. Its mechanism is rather a series of subtle instruments which bears more directly on the material, physical elements. These instruments include time-tables, exercises, compulsory movements, regular activities. Based on these instruments, subtle coercion is carried out through a multiplicity of continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our body, govern our gesture and dictate our behaviour. The effects of power take place in the body and its elements. There is a conditioning or, more precisely, a constitution of our gestures, our movements, our attitudes, our behaviours.

Foucault's analysis implies a challenge to the traditional theories which assume the subjection to be based either on an external enforcement or an internal enforcement. As discussed by Cousins and Hussain (1984:241-2), Hart, the jurisprudential theorist differentiates an external mechanism and an internal mechanism in explaining why legal subjects obey law. In Hart's view, on the one hand, laws are externally enforced by legal authorities which have the capacity to apply force when they disobey. On the other hand, the acceptance by the legal subjects is no less important. It is based on their acceptance that laws are internally enforced. Foucault, in contrast, shows that the explanation of submission

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<sup>9</sup> Foucault points out that there can be a variety of ways in which subjection is obtained. He says: "This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology; it can also be direct, physical, pitting force against violence; it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain of a physical order"(Foucault, 1979: 26).

requires nothing like a binary opposition between external enforcement and internal enforcement.

As Cousins and Hussain point out, the notion of internal enforcement is of special importance to traditional theories since it is the obverse of the notion of legitimation. Rules which are recognized as legitimate are internally enforced, while those which are not recognized as such can only be externally enforced. Habermas's theory, which is preoccupied with the problematic of legitimacy, focuses on the internal enforcement. According to Habermas, as power is organized in the form of asymmetrical relations, those in the subordinate position are structurally disadvantaged, especially when the enforcement of certain rules or decisions is against their will. In order for power to be recognized as legitimate, Habermas suggests that the possibility of the coercion of will has to be excluded. In proposing a model of discourse, Habermas thinks that the problem of coercion has been resolved. He is, however, unable to realize that the coercion that power implies can be more direct, more physical, bearing more on material elements. The effects of power can take place not through a coercion of will or seizing of our consciousness, but rather through a coercion of our body. Foucault says:

What I want to show is how power relations can materially penetrate the body in depth, without depending even on the mediation of the subject's own representations. If power takes hold on the body, this isn't through its having first to be interiorized in people's consciousness. (Foucault, 1980a:186)

For Habermas, the possibility of coercion has to be excluded so that we may have a legitimate power which is productive as well as noncoercive. As pointed out before, Habermas has two categories of power: one is positive and noncoercive; the other is negative and coercive. Foucault's notion of disciplinary power causes difficulties for Habermas since the productive side of disciplinary power cannot be separated from its coercive side. Disciplinary power imposes a relation of docility-utility upon the forces of the body. This means that the body becomes a useful force only if



it is both a productive body and a subjected body. In other words, it becomes productive when it is subjected; it becomes subjected when it is useful. As discussed above, the subjection is obtained by subtle coercion. Hence we may say: the body becomes productive when it is coerced; the body becomes coerced when it is productive. The productive side and the coercive side of power are linked together. Their separation seems impossible as the coercive side is an indispensable condition for its productive character.

Foucault (1979a:152) illustrates this form of power with an example of the training of handwriting. In the training of a pupil's handwriting, the productive side of power is linked to its coercive side. The coercion which power imposes upon the body involves a calculated manipulation of its elements and its gestures. There is an exact position for each part of the body: the back, the elbow, the chin, the right arm, the left arm, the right foot, the left foot.<sup>10</sup> The teacher will place the pupil in the posture that is required for good handwriting. If the pupil changes the position, the teacher will correct it. It is through such kind of coercion that utility is produced. But how does coercion guarantee a positive result; how does coercion maximise utility?

Disciplinary power coerces our body not simply by imposing a series of gestures; it imposes the best relation between a gesture and the overall position of the body, which is the condition of good handwriting, of efficiency and speed, and even of health. For example, it requires a pupil to sit at a distance of two fingers from the table, so that s/he would not acquire the habit of pressing the stomach against the table which is harmful to the health. In this sense, coercion maximises utility because

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<sup>10</sup> "The pupils must always hold their bodies erect, somewhat turned and free on the left side, slightly inclined, so that, with the elbow placed on the table, the chin can be rested upon the hand, unless this were to interfere with the view; the left leg must be somewhat more forward under the table than the right. A distance of two fingers must be left between the body and the table; for not only does one write with more alertness, but nothing is more harmful to the health than to acquire the habit of pressing one's stomach against the table; the part of the left arm from the elbow to the hand must be placed on the table. The right arm must be at a distance from the body of about three fingers and be about five fingers from the table, on which it must rest lightly" (Foucault, 1979a:152).

knowledge is involved. It is a knowledge about the body, and its elements. Knowledge is at work in order for coercion to produce utility. In the next chapter, I shall discuss the relationship between knowledge and power in detail.

Besides imposing the best relation between the gesture and the overall position of the body, disciplinary power may produce utility through imposing the best relation between the body and the object it manipulates. For instance, in the training of the use of the rifle, each part of the body is correlated with a certain part of the object according to a certain gesture.<sup>11</sup>

It consists of a breakdown of the total gesture into two parallel series: that of the parts of the body to be used (right hand, left hand, different fingers of the hand, knee, eye, elbow, etc.) and that of the parts of the object manipulated (barrel, notch, hammer, screw, etc.); then the two sets of parts are correlated together according to a number of simple gestures (rest, bend) ... (Foucault, 1979a:153)

Again in contrast to what Habermas's theory presupposes, the coercive side of power cannot be separated from its productive side. It is through coercion that the effective use of the rifle is brought about.

Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power cannot be denied its novelty. While it runs counter to Habermas's theory in a number of ways, nevertheless it may not be clear whether Foucault can successfully challenge Habermas's theory. Fraser, for instance, comments that "what

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<sup>11</sup> "Bring the weapon forward. In three stages. Raise the rifle with the right hand, bringing it close to the body so as to hold it perpendicular with the right knee, the end of the barrel at eye level, grasping it by striking it with the right hand, the arm held close to the body at waist height. At the second stage, bring the rifle in front of you with the left hand, the barrel in the middle between the two eyes, vertical, the right hand grasping it at the small of the butt, the arm outstretched, the trigger-guard resting on the first finger, the left hand at the height of the notch, the thumb lying along the barrel against the moulding. At the third stage, let go of the rifle with the left hand, which falls along the thigh, raising the rifle with the right hand, the lock outwards and opposite the chest, the right arm half flexed, the elbow close to the body, the thumb lying against the lock, resting against the screw, the hammer resting on the first finger, the barrel perpendicular" (Foucault, 1979a:153).

Foucault needs, and needs desperately, are normative criteria for distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable forms of power" (Fraser, 1989:33). In other words, Fraser judges that Foucault's analysis does not provide any normative criteria for us to distinguish whether disciplinary power is acceptable or unacceptable. Moreover, if it is unacceptable, Fraser asks, why is struggle preferable to submission? why ought domination to be resisted? She concludes that it is only with the introduction of normative notions of some kind that Foucault could begin to answer these questions (Fraser, 1989:29). Taylor thinks that the most important question is how to distinguish legitimate disciplinary power from illegitimate disciplinary power? He suggests that the coercion or constraints that disciplinary power implies can be justified in terms of its role in democratic politics (Taylor, 1986:81-2). Habermas could not agree more. For him, though there may be problems associated with power, such as its asymmetrical character, power can be justified as long as it is legitimized in terms of its bearing on collectively determined goals. Therefore, even if power involves coercion of the body, Habermas may see it as justified as long as power is legitimized in terms of its bearing on collectively determined goals. From the perspective of Habermas's theory, the coercion of the body can be "offset" or "compensated" when power is legitimized. Though his theory overlooks the coercion forced on the body, Habermas can still maintain that it is the coercion of the will that is determinant.

There is no doubt that in terms of the problematic of legitimacy, it is the coercion of the will that is determinant. And it is quite true that Foucault's analysis cannot answer the question "why fight?". Nor does it try to provide any justification for submission or resistance. Nevertheless, what should be noticed is that the problematic of legitimacy and the question of normative justification both belong to the juridico-discursive mode that Foucault's analysis seeks to eschew. Foucault's contribution or challenge, I suggest, should better be considered in terms of its presenting an alternative mode of analysis to the juridico-discursive mode.



### *A strategic model -- an alternative mode of analysis*

The significance of Foucault's work, I contend, lies in its providing not only a novel account of new forms of power, but an alternative mode of analysis of power. I shall call this mode of analysis "a strategic model". The term "a strategic model" has been applied to different meanings in Foucault's work.<sup>12</sup> Here I shall use only one of the meanings in my discussion. The word "strategy", as Foucault explains, can be used to designate the means employed to attain a certain end. When power is analyzed from the perspective of strategy, it means that one is concerned with "the totality of the means put into operation to implement power effectively or to maintain it" (Foucault, 1982:225). In other words, the strategic model concerns the means that bring about the effects of power. In contrast to the juridico-discursive mode which focuses on the question "how power is legitimized", this mode of analysis is preoccupied with the question "how power is exercised". Foucault claims that it is a question of "how". "How", not in the sense of "how does it manifest itself?" but "by what means is it exercised?" By asking the question how, one is interested in the power effects, in "what happens when individuals exert power over others?" (Foucault, 1982:217). Unlike a normative model, which pursues normative justifications for submission or resistance of power, a strategic model seeks to understand the means by which the effects of power are produced and maintained.

In this section, I shall elaborate on how to read Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power from the perspective of a strategic model.<sup>13</sup> I argue

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<sup>12</sup>In Foucault's work, the term "strategy" or "strategic model" can have different meanings. Here I only select a version of them and explain Foucault's analyses on the basis of my understanding of the strategic model. For his discussions of "strategic model" and "strategy", see Foucault, 1979b, p.102; 1982, pp.224-5. Also see his analysis of the strategies of sexuality in 1979b, pp.103-14. For a fruitful discussion of the notion of strategy, see Gordon, 1979, pp. 246-58.

<sup>13</sup> Here I mainly suggest disciplinary power be seen in terms of the perspective of a strategic model to discover what kinds of challenge it poses for Habermas's theory. On the other hand, one may see disciplinary power in terms of Foucault's notion of governmentality

that, from this perspective, not only some of Habermas's conclusions of power and modern pathologies are questioned, but so too is his juridico-discursive mode of analysis questioned.

A strategic model is concerned with how the effects of power are produced. According to Foucault, the existence of power is not ensured by rights, but rather by techniques. The meaning of this assertion is that the effects of power are not produced or maintained by rights, but by techniques. The notion of right cannot explain the capacity to produce power effects, or how power is implemented effectively. One has to look into the concrete mechanisms, the techniques and the instruments through which power effects are produced. Therefore, in outlining a new form of power in modern societies, Foucault focuses on the techniques that are used. His detailed description of the techniques of partition of time, space and movement allows us to understand how power is implemented effectively; his analysis of the coercion of the body allows us to see the processes by which power penetrates the body and is inscribed onto it. Hence his analysis of the disciplinary coercion is not to be seen as evidence for the legitimacy or illegitimacy of disciplinary power, but rather as a demonstration of how power is exercised or implemented effectively.

Likewise, Foucault's discussion of the utility produced by disciplinary power should be read from the perspective of a strategic model. In Foucault's view, power, in order to be implemented effectively, cannot merely negate.<sup>14</sup> If power merely negates, it is doubtful if it can secure its footing and maintain its effects. The exercise of power usually possesses certain political usefulness or economic utility so that it can be accepted; the coercive mechanisms usually produce utility in order to be widely

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and draw implications for Habermas's critical theory. Hindess (1996) has provided an interesting elaboration of discipline as a form of governmentality, and examined the implications these other forms of governmentality have for the liberal rationality of government that Habermas's critical theory relies upon. See Hindess, 1996, Chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>14</sup> See Foucault's discussion of the productive aspect of power and his criticism of the notion of repression in 1980b, pp. 118-21.

used. In order to produce utility, as discussed before, the coercive process involves the use of knowledge. It is a much more sophisticated mechanism than a simple application of coercion. It involves impositions of the best relation between the gesture and the body, of the best relation between the gesture and the object. It is through the employment of knowledge that coercion maximizes utility. The connection of the coercive side and the productive side of power is again not to be seen in terms of the problematic of legitimacy. Foucault has no intention of saying: because the coercion is productive, power is still considered as legitimate. Nor does he intend to say: because power is coercive, power is not to be recognized as illegitimate. What Foucault demonstrates is an interplay between the techniques of power, the coercion they accomplish, and the utility the coercion produced. It is a demonstration of the means by which power is implemented effectively.

According to this strategic model, in order to understand how power is exercised, one has to focus on techniques rather than rights. The other related characteristic is that one has to focus on the diverse local institutions rather than the central political institutions. Instead of focusing on the state, it focuses on the diverse local institutions in which power mechanisms are at work. The shift of focus does not imply a denial of the importance of the state, but rather a focus on the micro-mechanisms according to which different forms of power, including state power, operate. Foucault asserts that it does not mean that the state is not important. Nevertheless, firstly, the state cannot occupy the whole field of power relations. There are relations of power which cannot be captured by the notion of state. Secondly, the state can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations. State power can only secure its footing where it is rooted in a whole series of indefinite minute power networks that supply it with the necessary basis (Foucault, 1980b:122). Therefore, even if we want to look at the state power, one has to start from the lowest level, and investigate how mechanisms of power are able to function. In this sense, Foucault's mode of analysis does not suggest a straightforward refutation of the theory of <sup>the</sup> state or the theory of the



dominant class. Instead it replaces the descending analysis with an ascending analysis of power.

In advocating an ascending analysis, Foucault argues that while the confinement of the insane or the repression of sexuality may have something to do with the domination of the bourgeois class, we need to identify the real agents (the family, parents, doctors etc.) who are responsible for the phenomena of exclusion and repression, and not just lump them under the formula of a generalized bourgeoisie. Moreover, what serves the interest of the bourgeoisie is not so much the exclusion or the repression but the techniques and mechanisms of that exclusion and repression. For the bourgeoisie could not care less about the insane or infantile sexuality, and the capitalist system is quite able to tolerate the opposite practice. It is the mechanisms of exclusion and repression that are necessary for the bourgeoisie to maintain their interest (Foucault, 1980c:100-1). Therefore, what one needs is an ascending analysis. One should start by looking into the micro-mechanisms, studying how they emerged historically in diverse local institutions, revealing their political usefulness and lending themselves to economic profit, and finally being colonized and maintained by global forms of domination and the state. "It is only if we grasp these techniques of power and demonstrate the economic advantages or political utility that derives from them in a given context for specific reasons, that we can understand how these mechanisms come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole" (Foucault, 1980c:101).

Foucault summarizes the difference between his mode of analysis and the juridico-discursive mode in the following way:

In the very first place, it seemed important to accept that the analysis in question should not concern itself with the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations, with the general mechanisms through which they operate, and the continual effects of these. On the contrary, it should be concerned with power at extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more

regional and local forms and institutions. Its paramount concern, in fact, should be with the point where power surmounts the rules of right which organize and delimit it and extends itself beyond them, invests itself in institutions, becomes embodied in techniques, and equips itself with instruments and eventually even violent means of material intervention. (Foucault, 1980c:96)

Instead of seeing how power is organized by the rules of right, Foucault's analysis looks into how power becomes embodied in techniques. In addition, far from concerning itself with power in the central political institutions, his analysis is concerned with power "at the points where it becomes capillary, that is, power in its more regional and local forms and institutions". These two interrelated features, the concern with techniques and the focus on diverse local institutions, differentiate Foucault's mode of analysis from Habermas's juridico-discursive mode. I suggest that the insights of Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power cannot be fully examined from the perspective of the juridico-discursive mode of analysis. Rather one should appreciate its insights from the perspective of a strategic model.

First of all, it is on a strategic model that Foucault's discovery of a new form of power, discipline, is based. Instead of focusing on the legitimate forms of power in the central political institutions, Foucault's analysis is concerned with "power in its more regional and local forms and institutions". Therefore Foucault's analysis starts by looking into diverse, local institutions like the prison, the school, the army, the hospital and the workshop. He discovers that a new form of power emerged in these institutions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which he calls discipline. This disciplinary power, though it can be taken over by the state institutions, is basically a local form of power and is linked to diverse, local institutions. Secondly, as the strategic model focuses on techniques, Foucault approaches disciplinary power as a technology. The local character as well as the technological character of disciplinary power imply certain kinds of challenge to Habermas's theory.

According to Foucault, discipline "is a type of power, a modality for its exercise ... an 'anatomy' of power, a *technology*". It comprises a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets (Foucault, 1979a:215). The term "technology" implies that discipline possesses an intrinsic rationality of its own, and that it represents a specific level of intelligence and progressivity.<sup>15</sup> Foucault characterizes its intelligence, progressivity and rationality in terms of a relation of docility-utility that it imposes on the body. While some of the instruments and procedures were used in the past, like time-tables, enclosure, and spatial distribution, they are now modified, refined and combined in a different way to produce a new modality of power. This modality "implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result, and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement" (Foucault, 1979a:137). As the term technology signifies, this form of power implies a certain sense of progress. It minimizes the cost and maximizes the utility in its exercise.

The appearance of discipline, or maybe technology in general, does not come as a sudden invention. It is rather "a multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another" (Foucault, 1979a:138). It goes through processes of development, then gets into circulation, and finally becomes widely used in society. According to Foucault, discipline was at work in secondary schools at a very early date, later in primary schools. It slowly spread to hospitals, and a few decades later to the military organization. Then it spread to workshops, as manifested by the militarization of the large workshops (Foucault, 1979a:138).

Throughout the eighteenth century, Foucault writes, there was an increase in the number of institutions that employed disciplinary methods. While discipline was first adopted in enclosed institutions for

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<sup>15</sup> See Gordon's (1979) discussion of the concept of "technologies", as well as the relation between programmes, technologies, and strategies.



negative reasons such as to neutralize dangers, to fix disturbed populations and to avoid idleness, it is increasingly used for its positive function of producing useful individuals. It becomes attached to the essential functions of a society: material production, the transmission of knowledge, the diffusion of aptitudes and skills (Foucault, 1979a:210-11). Therefore discipline is no longer confined to enclosed institutions. It has spread to different sectors of society, with diverse domains of its application.

With the spread of discipline, Foucault says, one can speak of the formation of a disciplinary society.

Not because the disciplinary modality of power has replaced all the others, but because it has infiltrated the others, sometimes undermining them, but serving as an intermediary between them, linking them together, extending them and above all making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements. (Foucault, 1979a:216)

Discipline has spread to different domains of a society, and interwoven with other social relations, like the parent-child relation, the teacher-pupil relation, the doctor-patient relation, the supervisor-worker relation and so on. What does this spread of disciplinary power tell us? What kinds of implication does it have for Habermas's theory?

The fact that power permeates society and is spread over all its domain does not itself constitute any challenge to Habermas's theory. For Habermas thinks that this is exactly the phenomenon that we face and the problem that we need to tackle. The major difference between Foucault's and Habermas's theories should rather be seen in terms of the way they conceive of the spread of power. I shall raise two points in relation to this. Firstly, Habermas talks about the spread of power as a colonization of lifeworld. According to the thesis "colonization of lifeworld", there is a vector of motion from the system to the lifeworld. The spread of power is

conceived as an intrusion of the system mechanisms into the lifeworld. Foucault's analysis, in contrast, speaks against this conception.<sup>16</sup>

Discipline, as discussed above, is developed in a multiplicity of minor processes, of different origins and diverse locations. These processes repeat one another, imitate one another, modify one another, and support one another. Discipline does not spread from the system to the lifeworld, or from the political system to the family. The family is one of those locations in which discipline emerged, and was developed and perfected. As power gradually emerged and developed in diverse, local institutions, the institutions of lifeworld are no less likely to be inhabited by power. As discussed in Chapter 2, feminist studies show that the family is permeated with its own problems of power, and the system of domination is spread from the family to the economic and political systems. Fraser says that instead of drawing the battle line between the system and the lifeworld, from a feminist perspective, there is a more basic battle line between the forms of male dominance linking system to lifeworld *and us*. From the perspective of Foucault, perhaps we may say that the battle line should be drawn between power, which penetrates all these spheres, *and us*.

Secondly, Habermas's analysis of modern pathologies conceives the spread of power in terms of a transgression of the limit and boundary. This analysis can be regarded as a juridico-discursive model which assumes that power is organized according to the rules of right and that its right can be delimited to a certain domain. Foucault's strategic model, in contrast, focuses on techniques rather than on rights. It approaches disciplinary power as a technology. Being a technology, discipline has nothing like a proper domain of its own. Instead of a transgression of limits and boundary, the spread of discipline should be conceived as a spread of the technology.

Discipline, being a technology which comprises a set of techniques and procedures, is characterized by flexibility and adaptability. Its techniques

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<sup>16</sup> For the study of state power, there may be a vector of motion, but it is the other way round. Foucault suggests an ascending analysis to replace the descending analysis.

and procedures can be broken down, modified and adapted according to the domain of application. Its flexibility and adaptability can perhaps be compared to the technology of the computer. While the technology of computer is developed and used as information system by economic or administrative institutions, it can be adapted to the needs of other domains of application, for example, to provide distance learning programs for educational purposes, to provide games for entertainment, or to provide a means for design and artistic expression. Discipline, which is characterized by such a flexibility and adaptability, can be adopted and used by different kinds of institutions and for different purposes.

For instance, Foucault writes, discipline was employed by 'specialized' institutions like the penitentiaries of the nineteenth century for correction purposes. It can also be taken over by institutions that use it as an essential instrument for a particular end, like schools and hospitals. Moreover, discipline can be taken up by different forms of power, like the state power. Police, as a state apparatus, can use discipline to ensure the surveillance of society by the state power. According to Foucault, the eighteenth-century police added a disciplinary function to its role as the auxiliary of justice in the pursuit of criminal and as an instrument for the political supervision of plots, opposition movements or revolt. They adopted a panopticon method of surveillance, employing observers, secret agents, and informers to carry out an unceasing observation of the population (Foucault, 1979a:213-6). While discipline can be easily taken over by state apparatuses, nevertheless, Foucault says, "it may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus" (Foucault, 1979a:215). Perhaps one should imagine discipline in terms of the fact that a technology cannot be reduced to its institutional user.

In contrast to Habermas's attempt to delimit the right of power to a certain domain, Foucault's analysis shows that there is no such a domain for the technology of disciplinary power. Because of its technological character, discipline is able to circulate widely in the society and penetrate every sphere of our life.



## Conclusion

From the perspective of a juridico-discursive model of power, one is concerned with how to submit power to the rules of right; one is preoccupied with the construction of normative principles for the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power. Habermas comments that Foucault fails to provide any normative principles in his critique of disciplinary power. Foucault's suspension of the normative question, I argue, introduces us to an alternative approach to power, which is, in many ways, both stimulating and fruitful.

From the perspective of a strategic model, Foucault is concerned with the means by which power is implemented effectively. In order to investigate this, he focuses on techniques rather than rights; he examines diverse local institutions rather than central political institutions. In this way, his analysis brings to light many things which the juridico-discursive model of power fails to capture. For example, in terms of right, it is claimed that prison aims at restoring individuals as juridical subjects. Nevertheless, focusing on the techniques and instruments used in prison, one sees that there are time-tables, exercises, compulsory movements and regular activities which function not so much to restore juridical subjects as to produce docile bodies. Hence, side by side with right, Foucault shows that there is a disciplinary form of power which coerces the body and puts into surveillance its elements, its behaviour, its gestures. Habermas's preoccupation with right leads to his failure to see the techniques of discipline, as well as the element of domination and coercion inherent in the techniques.

In order to examine how power effects are produced, Foucault does not focus on the central political institutions, but rather looks into the diverse local institutions where power mechanisms are at work. He sees that there

is a technology of discipline which is developed from a multiplicity of minor processes, of different origins and diverse locations. Its technological character enables it to be used by different institutions and for different purposes. The institutional orders of lifeworld, that is, the family institution and the public sphere, are as likely to use it as the central state institutions. Habermas's theory, which locates power at the central state institutions, fails to recognize the local as well as technological character of power. His preoccupation with a juridico-discursive model of power leads to his failure both to recognize the pervasiveness of power and to understand the way in which power is spread to different spheres of our life.

Foucault's insights are not exhausted by the discussion in this chapter. He shows that discipline is a form of power which combines with knowledge in its operation. As mentioned before, in the training of handwriting and the use of rifles, discipline does not simply coerce, it imposes the best relation between the gesture and the overall position of the body; it imposes the best relation between each part of the body and the object it manipulates. All these require knowledge to play a part. From the perspective of a strategic model, one is concerned with the totality of means by which power effects are produced. In other words, one is concerned with the involvement of knowledge in the operation of power. In the next chapter, I shall discuss Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge and show the kinds of challenge it has for Habermas's theory.

## Chapter 4

### POWER AND KNOWLEDGE

Both Habermas and Foucault are concerned about the domination of scientific knowledges in modern western societies. They conduct a critique of science so as to open up space for other knowledges. Despite these similarities, the kind of critique they carry out differs from each other in a fundamental way. Habermas's critique of science, I suggest, can be considered in terms of a juridico-discursive mode which is guided by the question of how to submit science to the rules of right. For him, when science operates within the limits of its own domain, it is seen as lawful, as legitimate; when science transgresses the boundary and invades the domains of others, it is seen as unlawful, as illegitimate. In other words, science is unproblematic when it operates according to the rules of right. Habermas's discourse model further represents science in itself as unproblematic. He portrays an internal relation between reason and science. Hence while science may lend itself to the formation of ideologies and fall a prey to power, it is not regarded as internally linked to power, but rather to truth and reason.

Foucault's analysis, I contend, can be considered in terms of a strategic model which focuses not so much on the question of right, but rather on the mechanisms through which power effects are produced. Instead of fixing the legitimacy of science or asking what is the proper domain of a certain knowledge, Foucault examines the role of certain knowledges in the production of effects of power. From this perspective, he sees that on the one hand, power produces knowledges and on the other hand, these knowledges produce power effects. That is, there is a mutual production between knowledge and power. Nevertheless, one may ask: what is the novelty of Foucault's analysis, for Habermas could not have overlooked this mutual production of knowledge and power? He is certainly aware of



the fact that in late capitalist societies, science lends support to state domination and thus produces power effects. On the other hand, he would not deny that the state might encourage the development of science to serve its own domination, and hence there is a power's production of knowledge. If Habermas could not be blind to the mutual production of knowledge and power, what challenges does Foucault's analysis pose to Habermas?

In this chapter, I argue that Foucault and Habermas have very different views about the ways in which knowledge relates to power. When Foucault says "power produces knowledge", his point is not simply that power, as an external force, encourages knowledge by applying and using it for its own purpose. Instead Foucault shows that power constitutes the internal condition of the possibility of certain knowledges. Similarly, when Foucault sees knowledge from a strategic model as part of the totality of means by which power is exercised, he does not treat those knowledges as external to the power effects produced. Instead they form the internal condition of power, without which the production of power effects would not be possible. In contrast to Habermas, Foucault demonstrates that there is an internal rather than external relation between knowledge and power.

If knowledge is internally linked to power, it is knowledge rather than false ideologies that produces power effects. It is true knowledge, or truth, that implies power. The problem is no longer falsehood or ideology, but truth. Foucault's work, therefore, not only problematizes knowledge, but also truth. If truth is problematized, on what basis can Foucault's critique stand? If truth is part of the means by which power is exercised, we can no longer assume that "truth will make you free". If truth is internally linked to power, what are we going to do with truth?

This chapter first discusses Habermas's critique of science. Then it examines the challenges that Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge poses to Habermas's critique. The last section elaborates the implications of Foucault's analysis for those who believe that "truth will make you free".

#### 4.1 Habermas: on Knowledge and Power

Habermas has always been critical about the spread of scientific knowledge and the role it plays in late-capitalist societies. He sees that the major problem of science lies in the overexpansion of its role into the spheres that require communicative action as mechanism for action coordination. Science, allied with state bureaucratization, disempowers the public's opinion formation and uncouples political decision from the public sphere of the lifeworld. Democratic decision-making loses its function, and state technocrats take over the role in the decision-making of social and political issues. Habermas asserts that the role of science must be circumscribed to a certain domain. His work *Knowledge and Human Interests* can be read as an early attempt to define the domain of science.

Habermas's critique of science is an approach which seeks to draw limits and boundaries. I regard his approach as "juridico-discursive" since it is preoccupied with how to submit science to the rules of right.<sup>1</sup> From the perspective of a juridico-discursive model, science is regarded as unproblematic as long as it is confined to its own domain. Habermas's discourse theory further represents science or true knowledge as pure, innocent, unproblematic, and outside power. I shall first discuss Habermas's critique of science in *Knowledge and Human Interests* and then examine his representation of knowledge in the discourse theory.

In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas differentiates three distinctive forms of knowledge, each guided by a cognitive interest and grounded in a fundamental condition of human life. The first form of

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<sup>1</sup> See my discussion of a juridico-discursive mode of analysis in Chapter 3. Specifically, one of the major characteristics of the juridico-discursive model is its representation of power as organized by the rules of right. When power is submitted to the rules of right, it is regarded as lawful, as legitimate. Illegitimate power is one which transgresses the boundaries and invades others' right.

knowledge is empirical-analytic sciences. They are what we normally understand as science, which is guided by a technical interest in dominating the natural and social environment. This technical interest in control is linked to a fundamental condition of human existence: labor. It becomes a cognitive interest which constitutes the domain of empirical-analytical sciences, their objects of study and their procedures of analysis. Habermas holds that this cognitive interest in technical control cannot replace other cognitive interests, which guide the second and third forms of knowledge.

According to Habermas, the second form of knowledge is historical-hermeneutic sciences, which provide us with knowledge of intersubjectively established meanings. They are guided by a practical interest of mutual understanding, an interest grounded in a fundamental condition of human life -- linguistic communication. Critical theory, the third form of knowledge, is linked to another fundamental condition of human life -- power. It is guided by an emancipatory interest which seeks to free consciousness from its dependence on hypostatized powers. For Habermas, since each of these forms of knowledge is guided by an interest which is grounded in a fundamental condition of human existence, one should be as important as the other; one should have the same right to exist as the other. The problem of science, he contends, lies in its monopolization of the field of knowledge.

Habermas argues that guided by a false self-understanding and supported by a false philosophy, science seeks to monopolize the whole field of knowledge and in effect suppresses the right of other forms of knowledge. Scientism, the false self-understanding of science, and positivism, the philosophy developed by Comte, are the two major targets of Habermas's critique. According to Habermas, "scientism" and "positivism" identify knowledge with science. They assume that what science does defines the meaning of knowledge. In his words,

"scientism" means science's belief in itself: that is, the conviction that we can no longer understand science as



one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science. The positivism that enters on the scene with Comte makes use of elements of both the empiricist and rationalist traditions in order to strengthen science's belief in its exclusive validity after the fact, instead of to reflect (reflektieren) on it, and to account for the structure of sciences on the basis of this belief. (Habermas, 1978:4-5)

In Habermas's view, the problem of scientism and positivism is that they fail to recognize that there are forms of knowledge other than science, each of them has its own right to exist.

Habermas's critique of science, I suggest, can be considered in terms of a juridico-discursive model which seeks to submit science to the rules of right. What preoccupies Habermas is a demarcation of domains, a drawing of limits and boundaries. When science functions within its own domain, it is considered as lawful, as legitimate. The problem of science lies in its attempt to monopolize the whole field of knowledge. In subjecting other forms of knowledge to the demand of technical interest, science invades others' domains and deprives<sup>them</sup> of their own right to exist. For Habermas, science is condemned when it transgresses its own boundary and suppresses the rights of other forms of knowledge.

Habermas's critique of science in a more recent article "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'" can be considered in the same terms; nevertheless, this time, science is condemned for its invasion of the domain of communicative action. Habermas analyzes how the expansion of the role of science and technology leads to a replacement of that of communicative action. In late capitalist societies, he writes, the ideology of free exchange is replaced by a substitute program, that is, a program of government action designed to compensate for the dysfunctions of free exchange. Policies are oriented to the provision of a minimum of welfare and to the guarantee of secure employment and stable income. The substitute program thus obliges the political system to maintain stabilizing conditions for the growth of the economy and to guard against risks that

may threaten the economic growth. As politics is oriented toward the elimination of dysfunctions and the avoidance of risks, the state administration is no longer concerned with realization of practical goals. The solution of technical problems becomes the only concern and technical issues dominate the agenda. Science and technology are then looked upon as the only source for the solution of these issues (Habermas, 1989:251-2).

In Habermas's view, science lends itself to the formation of ideologies and achieves a replacement of the role of communicative action. In particular, Habermas points out that there is a technocracy thesis which becomes a background ideology that penetrates into the consciousness of the depoliticized mass of the population. This technocracy thesis sees the development of the social system as determined by the logic of scientific-technical progress. When this belief has taken root,

then propaganda can refer to the role of science and technology in order to explain and legitimate why in modern societies the process of democratic decision-making about practical problems loses its function and "must" be replaced by plebiscitary decisions about alternative sets of leaders of administrative personnel. (Habermas, 1989:253)

Habermas argues that this ideology justifies the elimination of practical questions and the suppression of the role of communicative action. It enables society's self-understanding to be detached from the frame of reference of communicative action and from the concepts of symbolic interaction and replaces them with a scientific model.

Science here is condemned for its replacing the role of communicative action. For Habermas, while science does have a role in solving technical problems, it cannot take over the role of communicative action in the opinion formation of practical issues; while the development of the social system does depend upon the logic of scientific-technical progress, it also relies upon the development of the practical/moral dimension which should be under the coordination of communicative action. He sees that

now science, allied with ideologies and the state domination, exercises an illegitimate power in its invasion of the domain of communicative action.

A juridico-discursive mode of analysis condemns power when it transgresses boundaries and invades others' domains. On the other hand, the right of power is affirmed when it is exercised within limits. Habermas's analysis of science can be considered as juridico-discursive. That is, his critique of science at the same time functions as a legitimation of science. While science is criticized in terms of its invading the domain of communicative action, its right is affirmed in the critique. For example, Habermas would be happy to see that science is employed by enlightened citizens, who participate in public discussion of social issues, for solving a technical problem. In other words, the right of science, in relation to its role in solving technical issues, is affirmed. As long as science works in its proper domain, it is considered as legitimate, as unproblematic.

What should be noticed is that Habermas tends to see science in itself as unproblematic. Science is problematic only when it is guided by a false self-understanding or linked to a false ideology and results in a suppression of the right of other forms of knowledge or the right of communicative action. For Habermas, science is innocent and unproblematic, as it is internally connected with reason.

In a critique of the work of Horkheimer and Adorno, Habermas argues that science is linked to reason. Habermas writes, there are achievements of the Enlightenment which show that reason is still at work. They are elements of cultural modernity which demonstrate an increase in freedom and autonomy. One of these elements, Habermas believes, is the self-reflection of science that allows it to have the status of theoretical knowledge. He comments:

*The Dialectic of Enlightenment* does not do justice to the rational content of cultural modernity that was captured in bourgeois ideals (and also instrumentalized along with them). I am thinking here of the specific theoretical dynamic that continually pushes the sciences, and even



the self-reflection of the science, beyond merely engendering technically useful knowledge. (Habermas, 1982b:113)

For Habermas, the self-reflective dimension of science reveals that science is inherently linked to reason. His discourse theory serves to demonstrate more carefully the internal relation between science, or true knowledge in general, and reason.

According to Habermas, science, or theoretical knowledge in general, contains truth claims, that is, statements which are asserted to be true. While knowledge contains truth claims, it does not follow that the statements asserted to be true are really true statements. For Habermas, to make a distinction between true knowledge and false knowledge is an important task, and his discourse theory provides the criteria for the distinction. According to his discourse theory, true knowledge is one whose truth claims can be made good, whereas false knowledge is one whose truth claims cannot be made good. Truth claims, Habermas maintains, can only be made good through discussion and argumentation in discourse. Participants in discourse have no other purposes except a cooperative search for truth. With a suspension of the pressure of experience and decision, they are to produce cogent arguments that are convincing in virtue of their intrinsic properties. Participants are to evaluate these arguments solely on the basis of the force of the better argument. The consensus they arrive at is seen as backed by the force of reason.

In this way, Habermas aims to portray an internal relation between knowledge and truth, between knowledge and reason. True knowledge is knowledge which can be grounded in a notion of truth. Habermas here provides a notion of truth which emphasizes good arguments, intersubjective justification and rational consensus. True knowledge is one whose claim is supported by good arguments; true knowledge is one whose claim can be intersubjectively justified; true knowledge is one whose claim can command rational consensus. In brief, true knowledge is

one whose claim is backed by the mere force of reason. In this sense, the notion of truth is inseparable from the notion of reason. Knowledge, which is internally linked to truth, is also internally linked to reason. In portraying an internal relation between knowledge and truth, between knowledge and reason, Habermas's discourse theory represents science as internally linked to truth and reason.

Habermas's discourse theory not only portrays an internal relation between knowledge on the one hand, and truth and reason on the other, but also represents knowledge as outside power. According to his discourse theory, truth claims have to be put to test in argumentation. The claims are to be backed up by rationally motivated consensus rather than empirically motivated consensus. "Empirically motivated consensus", according to Habermas, is based on the consideration of empirical interests. The parties involved put forth claims which are backed up by the possession of means of reward and punishment. "Rationally motivated consensus", in contrast, is solely based on the force of the better argument. But what guarantees the consensus achieved in discourse is rationally motivated?

In order to guarantee that argumentation would lead to rationally motivated consensus, Habermas specifies the rules and conditions of discourse in the notion of an ideal speech situation. One of the rules specifies that no speaker ought to be hindered by external or internal constraints from making use of their rights in the participation of discourse. "External constraints" are referred to the influence of power or the threat of force; "internal constraints" are referred to ideological distortions and self-deception.<sup>2</sup> With an exclusion of external and internal constraints, the argumentation process is safeguarded from any kind of distorting influence and hence is subject merely to the force of reason.

According to the notion of an ideal speech situation, the discursive test must exclude power relations or any influence of power. The presence of

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1, p.53, the rules of an ideal speech situation. Also see McCarthy, 1978, p.306-7.

power relations runs counter to the symmetrical conditions of discourse; the influence of power forms an external constraint for participants. It is only with an absence of power relations that rationally motivated consensus is possible; it is only when the discursive test is insulated from the influence of power that true knowledge is possible. In this way, the production of knowledge is represented as outside power. Power is represented as external to truth, as lacking in truth.

On the one hand, Habermas's discourse theory portrays an internal relation between science and reason; on the other hand, it portrays an external relation between science and power. This, of course, does not mean that science is always opposed to power. Indeed Habermas's analysis of late-capitalist societies is concerned with the way in which science lends itself to ideological formations and serves as an instrument of state domination. Yet when science joins hands with power, science is seen as a victim which falls a prey to power. In addition, for Habermas, it is ideologies like the technocracy thesis and the scientific model rather than science itself that are to be blamed. Science is seen as outside power, innocent and in itself unproblematic.

In sum, Habermas's critique of science is guided by the juridico-discursive mode of analysis which sees science as unproblematic when it operates within its own domain. With a discourse model, science is represented as internally linked to truth and reason. While science may lend itself to the formation of false ideologies and fall a prey to power, science in itself is regarded as pure, unproblematic, and outside power. Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge, in contrast, portrays a much closer relation between knowledge and power. As I shall discuss in Part II, Foucault shows us that the ways in which knowledge relates to power are different from what Habermas's critique portrays.



## 4.2 Foucault's Analysis of Power and Knowledge and its Challenge to Habermas

Unlike Habermas, Foucault does not start with a notion of knowledge which is linked to reason and stands outside power. Instead he starts with the perspective of a strategic model which examines the ways in which power effects are produced. In this way, he finds that there is a much closer relation between knowledge and power. Foucault sees that in order for power to be implemented effectively, power produces knowledge. On the other hand, knowledge provides the means by which power effects are produced. In other words, there is a mutual production between power and knowledge. They are linked together in a circular relation: power producing and sustaining knowledge, while knowledge inducing and extending effects of power. Foucault's analysis, I contend, allows us to see that the ways in which power relates to knowledge are different from Habermas assumes. Before elaborating Foucault's insights for Habermas, I need to clarify a confusion caused by Foucault's discussion of power and knowledge.

Seeing that there is a close relation between power and knowledge, Foucault uses the term "power-knowledge", by which he intricates them as closely as a dash will allow. Foucault's use of the term "power-knowledge", nevertheless, gives the impression that knowledge is always linked to power, that power and knowledge directly imply one another. Indeed he has made general statements like these:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge ... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, 1979a:27)

Foucault seems to assert that whenever there is power, there is knowledge; whenever there is knowledge, there is power.<sup>3</sup> It is however not difficult to recognize the problem of this assertion. For it is hard to see the power effects directly implied by knowledges like the age of the universe, or the feeding habits of dinosaurs. Foucault's observation of the close relation between power and knowledge, I contend, should not be generalized to all kinds of knowledges. Instead it describes the specific relations between certain knowledges and power relations.<sup>4</sup>

For instance, with an analysis of the specific relations between the knowledge of sexuality and power relations in modern western societies, Foucault shows that the knowledge of sexuality is closely linked to power in a relation of constitutive interdependence. He says,

if sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely if power was able to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it. (Foucault, 1979b:98).

The knowledge of sexuality cannot be formed without power relations, and vice versa, power cannot be exercised without the knowledge. Foucault states that there are "local centres" of power-knowledge: the relations between the penitents and confessors, the relation between the children and an entire watch-crew of parents, nurses, educators, and doctors (Foucault, 1979b:98). In these local centres of power-knowledge, power and knowledge depend upon each other; they directly imply one another.

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<sup>3</sup>Keenan tends to read Foucault's notion of power-knowledge in this way. He says: "Power and knowledge are tangled up in the knot of a 'not-without.' Each presupposes the other: no knowledge without power, no power without knowledge. No outside, no priority" (Keenan, 1987:14).

<sup>4</sup> In opposition to an essentialist reading of Foucault, Wickham (1983) urges for a mode of analysis which treats its objects in terms of their specificity, their particular conditions of existence, without reference to an eternal, external essence. In a more recent article, Wickham (1990) argues that when the concepts of the postmodern are used to construct general frameworks, they block specific analyses, and become another source of totalization. Also see Hindess, 1977; Minson, 1980; for an elaboration of a non-essentialist analysis which emphasizes the specificity of objects.

While power and knowledge are shown to be linked together, one must, nevertheless, bear in mind the local and specific character of "power-knowledge".

After clarifying the local and specific character of Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge, we come back to its insights for Habermas. From the perspective of a strategic model, Foucault argues that in order for power to be implemented effectively, it must be productive: power produces utility; power produces knowledge. In contrast to Habermas's discourse theory which represents the production of knowledge outside power, Foucault argues that power produces knowledge. Foucault's first kind of challenge to Habermas's critique, I suggest, comes from his analysis of power's production of knowledge.

### *Power produces knowledge*

When Foucault says "power produces knowledge", he does not simply mean that power, as an external force, encourages knowledge by applying it and using it for its domination. Habermas would have no difficulty of recognizing the fact that the state might encourage the development of science by using science to serve its domination. What Foucault means is rather that power constitutes the historical condition of possibility of knowledge. In contrast to Habermas's transcendental project which delineates the a priori conditions of possibility of knowledge, Foucault engages in genealogies which examine the historical conditions of the possibility of some knowledges. The historical conditions of the modern human sciences are understood in relation to the elaboration of a whole range of techniques and practices for the discipline, surveillance, administration and government of human individuals. From this perspective, one sees that power, its *demands*, its *techniques*, and its



relations, constitute the historical condition for the development of these knowledges.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows that the demands of a new economy of power constitute the condition for the development of psychological knowledge. In the eighteenth century, he writes, humanist discourses brought about a series of penal reforms. Nevertheless, in contrast to the traditional understanding that these discourses brought about a more humane form of punishment and an advance of human rights, Foucault argues that they aimed at a new economy of power<sup>5</sup> which "allowed the effects of power to circulate in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted and 'individualised' throughout the entire social body" (Foucault, 1980b:119). The objective of the penal reform, Foucault says, was not so much to punish less, but to punish better, to punish more effectively (Foucault, 1979a:80-2). An effective punishment would include the prevention of a repetition of the offence.

In order for the punishment to prevent a repetition of the offence, it took into the account "the profound nature of the criminal himself, the presumable of his wickedness, the intrinsic quality of his will". It asked: 'Of the two men who committed the same theft, how much less guilty is he who scarcely had the necessities of life than he who overflowed with excess?' (Foucault, 1979a:98). It suggested the need for an individualization of sentences, in accordance with the particular characteristics of each criminal. This individualization, Foucault points out, was different from what was found in the old jurisprudence because it took into account of the intention of the defendant. "What was now beginning to emerge was a modulation that referred to the defendant himself, to his nature, to his way of life and his attitude of mind, to his past, to the 'quality' and not to

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<sup>5</sup> By "a new economy of power", Foucault means that the "new techniques are both much more efficient and much less wasteful (less costly economically, less risky in their results, less open to loopholes and resistances) than the techniques previously employed which were based on a mixture of more or less forced tolerances (from recognized privileges to endemic criminality) and costly ostentation (spectacular and discontinuous interventions of power, the most violent form of which was the 'exemplary', because exceptional, punishment)" (Foucault, 1980b:119).

the intention of his will" (Foucault, 1979a:99). This constituted the condition for the development of psychological knowledge. "One perceives, but as a place as yet unfilled, the locus in which, in penal practice, psychological knowledge will take over the role of jurisprudence"(Foucault, 1979a:99). The new economy of power, which demands an effectiveness of punishment, constituted the condition for the development of a scientific knowledge that reveals the profound nature of individuals.

In order to punish more effectively, the new economy of power also emphasized a rehabilitation and transformation of the individual. Power relations as well as the production of knowledge are required for achieving this aim. In prison, Foucault writes, the rehabilitation that it operates is a process that unfolds between prisoners and those who supervise them. When the prisoner first arrived, the inspectors already sought to demonstrate their power and transform the individual.

On first entering the prison, the prisoner will be read the regulations; 'at the same time, the inspectors seek to strengthen in him the moral obligations that he now has; they represent to him the offence that he has committed with regard to them, the evil that has consequently resulted for the society that protected him and the need to make compensation for his example and his amendment. They then make him promise to do his duty gladly, to behave decently, promising him or allowing him to hope that, before the expiration of the term of the sentence, he will be able to obtain his discharge if he behaves well. (Foucault, 1979a:125)

In achieving the aim of transformation, a whole corpus of individualizing knowledge was produced. In contrast to Habermas's view that knowledge is developed outside power, Foucault argues that power relations constitute the condition for the development of this individualizing knowledge. They included relations between administrators and the prisoner, between immediate supervisors and the prisoner, and between inspectors and the prisoner. The administrators did

not just keep records about the crime that the individual committed, but a whole series of information that revealed the nature of this individual. Foucault writes,

when the new prisoner arrived, the Walnut Street administration received a report concerning his crime, the circumstances in which it was committed, a summary of the examinations of the defendant, notes on his behaviour before and after the sentences: indispensable elements if one wished to 'decide what steps will have to be taken to destroy his old habits'. (Foucault, 1979a:125-6)

Throughout the detention prisoners would be observed, and comments would be made about them. Their conduct will be noted daily by their immediate supervisors. "The inspectors ... , visited the prison each week, would be kept informed of events, follow the conduct of each prisoner and decide which of them deserved a shortening of his term" (Foucault, 1979a:126). All these power relations enabled the administration to build up a whole corpus of knowledge about each individual.

Another example to show that knowledge is not developed outside power. In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault discusses the way in which knowledge of sexuality is produced through techniques of power and relations of power. Foucault writes, the production of truth, including the truth of sex, has always relied upon a technique of power -- confession. In the Christian penance, Foucault argues, confession was already a ritual which unfolds within a power relationship. For one does not confess without the presence of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console and reconcile (Foucault, 1979b:61-2). Gradually confession is no longer linked to the practice of penance. While it is spread to other sites, nevertheless, confession is still a practice imbued with power relations. The technique of confession involves a new series of power relations in the production of truths: children and parents, students and educators, patients and psychiatrists, delinquents and experts.



Power relations and the technique of confession are the conditions that constitute a scientific knowledge of sexuality. Foucault writes, beginning in the nineteenth century, sexuality, being a specific field of truth and knowledge, is situated at the point of intersection of the technique of confession and the scientific discursivity. The truths confessed are used to formulate a science of sex, which represents the uniform truth of sex, the truth of truths. Since the meaning of this truth is often blind to the individual who confesses, the extraction of meaning and its interpretation require the authority of professional and scientific knowledge. Medical and psychiatric professionals become not simply the forgiving master, the judge, but the master of truth (Foucault, 1979b:63-9). It is only through their power that the truth of truths is produced. The power relationship between the patient and the psychiatrist constitutes the condition for the production of the scientific knowledge of sexuality.

Therefore, in opposition to the representation of power and knowledge in Habermas's discourse model, Foucault argues,

we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests ... We should admit rather that power produces knowledge. (Foucault, 1979a:27)

While Habermas's discourse model represents the production of knowledge as free from power, Foucault's analysis examines the ways in which power produces knowledge. In contrast to Habermas's view that it is only with an absence of the influence of power that knowledge is possible, Foucault's analysis shows that the demands of a new economy of power constitute the historical condition for the development of psychology; in contrast to Habermas's view that it is with a suspension of power relations that knowledge is possible, Foucault's analysis shows that it is based on power relations that a whole corpus of scientific knowledge of sexuality is constituted.

From the perspective of the strategic model, in order for power to be implemented effectively, power produces knowledges. On the other hand, when examining the totality of means through which power produces effects, one would see that knowledge forms part of the totality of means. In other words, there is a mutual production between power and knowledge: on the one hand, power produces knowledge, and on the other hand, knowledge produces power. The second kind of Foucault's insights that I shall consider is his analysis of the way in which knowledge produces power effects.

### *Knowledge produces power effects*

The flaw of Habermas's discourse model lies in its overlooking power's production of knowledges. Nevertheless, Habermas certainly has not overlooked the power effects that knowledge produces. His critique of science and technology shows the way in which they lend themselves to ideological formation and hence serve as an instrument of state domination. What must be noticed however is that knowledge in this case is represented as something which originally stands outside power but at a certain point falls a prey to power. Power effects are produced in a way which follows the assumption that knowledge is outside power. Habermas's understanding of the power effects of knowledge is based on the assumption that science in itself is unproblematic. Foucault's work, in contrast, presents a different approach to conceive the power effects of knowledge. This constitutes what I consider the second kind of challenge that Foucault poses for Habermas's critique of knowledge.

For Foucault, if certain knowledges produce power effects, firstly, they are not originally outside power and then fall a prey to power like a victim. Instead they form an internal condition for the implementation of power effects. Secondly, it is not so much that knowledge lends itself to

ideological formation that power effects are produced, but, rather, it is true knowledge itself that produces power effects. In other words, the problem is not ideology, but rather truth. I shall elaborate these two points in the following discussion.

When Foucault says "power produces knowledge", he does not mean that power, as an external force, encourages knowledge by applying it for its purpose, but rather power constitutes an internal condition for the possibility of knowledge. Similarly, when he says "knowledge produces power", he does not treat knowledge as external to the power effects produced. Instead knowledge forms the internal condition without which the production of power effects would not be possible. In his analysis, the power effects are inseparable from knowledges. The power effects that knowledges produce are more immediate, more direct.

Foucault's analysis shows that knowledge can provide an internal condition for the implementation of power effects. The power effects that knowledge produces are immediate, for they reside in the categories and classification within a knowledge. For instance, the individualizing knowledge produced in prison contains a classification of prisoners. This classification constitutes an internal condition for the exercise of power, without which an hierarchical surveillance would not be able to implemented. From 1797, Foucault writes, the prisoners were divided into four groups in order to achieve hierarchical surveillance. The first group included those who were explicitly condemned to solitary confinement and those who had committed serious offences in the prison; the second group included those who were known as old offenders and whose depraved morality, dangerous character, irregular disposition, or disorderly conduct were apparent; the third group included those whose character and circumstance led one to believe that they were not habitual offenders; the fourth group included those whose character was still not known, or those who did not deserve to be put into the preceding categories (Foucault, 1979a:126).



This classification of prisoners is directly linked to hierarchical surveillance. It induces immediate effects of normalizing power. Normalizing power means that the effects of power works through the norm: "the Normal is established as a principle of coercion" (Foucault, 1979a:184). The norm involves a normal-abnormal dichotomy, and in prison, this is a harmless-dangerous dichotomy. The norm provides the rule to compare, differentiate, hierarchize, and exclude. In the example of the division of the prisoners, prisoners were differentiated and hierarchized according to their potentiality of danger. The first group, those who had committed serious offences, is regarded as the most dangerous group; those who were believed to be non-habitual offenders are regarded as the harmless<sup>group</sup>. With a division between dangerous and harmless, the norm not only hierarchizes, but also excludes and invalidates. For instance, the most dangerous individuals are condemned to solitary confinement; they are excluded from being considered for pardon or a reduced term. The effects of power were directly implied in the categories and classification.

The scientific knowledge of sexuality, too, induces immediate effects of normalizing power. It provides an internal condition for the exercise of power. It defines sexuality as 'by nature' a domain "susceptible to pathological processes, and hence one calling for therapeutic or normalizing interventions" (Foucault, 1979b:68). In therapeutic interventions, medical and psychiatric professionals exercise their normalizing judgment. An individual's sexual conduct is placed under the rule of the normal and the pathological. The result is not only a labelling of sexual conduct as normal or abnormal, but a labelling of the individual as normal or abnormal. The individual is pressured to conform to the standard of the normal. The effects of normalizing power are implied in the knowledge of sexuality. They circulate right at the point where scientific statements are formed.

Foucault says, the examination of the power effects of knowledge is "not so much a matter of knowing what external power imposes itself on

science, as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statements" (Foucault, 1980b:112). Knowledge is not seized by external power so that power effects are produced. It is knowledge itself that induces power effects. Moreover, knowledge does not lend itself to ideologies in order to produce power effects. The effects of power circulate among scientific statements, among true knowledge. It is truth rather than ideology that induces effects of power; it is true knowledge rather than false knowledge that produces power effects. The problem is not ideology or falsehood, but truth.

The development of psychology, for instance, provides us true knowledge about individuals. It is through this true knowledge that power effects are produced in prison. It reveals the true nature of the individuals and allows them to be judged '*in truth*'. Foucault says, the disciplinary machinery in prison

operates a differentiation that is not of acts, but of individuals themselves, of their nature, their potentialities, their level or their value. By assessing acts with precision, discipline judges individuals '*in truth*'; the penalty that it implements is integrated into the cycle of knowledge of individuals. (Emphasis added. Foucault, 1979a:181)

Knowledge does not fall a prey to power. Nor does it lend itself to ideologies in order to produce power effects. The critique that we need is not exactly a critique of ideology. It is rather a critique which helps us focus on truth. Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge, as Gordon says, "is not a scalpel serving to extract from the body of good, true science those ideologies which act as a comprador allies of repressive power (Gordon, 1979:29). Foucault maintains, the question for today is not so much error, illusion, false knowledge, or ideology; it is truth itself. He wants to shift our attention from ideology to truth.

In Foucault's view, the notion of ideology is problematic, particularly when it is used to explain power effects.<sup>6</sup> The notion of ideology assumes that power works through a negation of truth. It is associated with a negative concept of power, a power which negates and represses, a power which says 'no'. Foucault criticizes this negative concept of power from the perspective of a strategic model which focuses on the mechanisms through which power effects are implemented. In his view, the negative concept of power is wholly inadequate to the analysis of mechanisms and effects of power. If power never did anything but to say no, he argues, how would one be brought to obey to it? In order for power to be implemented effectively, there must be mechanisms other than those which simply repress. Power must be productive rather than repressive.

Foucault states, power produces desires and interests; power produces knowledge and truth. What he tries to do in the discussion of penal reforms, of psychiatric power, and of the control of sexuality, is to demonstrate the extent to which the mechanisms that were brought into operation in these power formations were something quite other, or in any case something much more, than repression. In order to understand how the effects of power are implemented effectively, Foucault maintains, we must replace the negative or repressive concept of power with a positive or productive concept of power.

Foucault's analysis shows that if knowledge produces power effects, it is not through the negation of truth, but its production. If knowledge does serve state domination, it is not through establishing a reign of ideology that negates truth, but rather through defining a field of empirical truth. As Gordon says,

if certain knowledges of 'Man' are able to serve a technological function in the domination of people, this is not so much thanks to their capacity to establish a reign of ideological mystification as to their ability to define a certain field of empirical truth (Gordon, 1979:29).

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<sup>6</sup> For Foucault's criticism of the notion of ideology, see Foucault, 1980c, p.102; 1980b, p.118-121.



In discussing a new form of power which focuses on the regulation of the population, Foucault shows that power effects are produced through establishing "sex" as a field of empirical truth. Foucault writes, besides the emergence of disciplinary power, there is another form of bio-power, emerged somewhat later, which focuses on the body. This form of power focuses on the species body, on the biological processes including propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity (Foucault, 1979b:139). This form of power concerns the regulation of the population. "Population" becomes an economic and political problem: "population as wealth, population as manpower or labor capacity, population balanced between its own growth and the resources it commanded" (Foucault, 1979b:25).

At the heart of the economic and political problem of population, Foucault argues, was sex. It was necessary to analyze the birth-rate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the ways of making them fertile or sterile, the effects of unmarried life or of the prohibitions, the impact of contraceptive practices. It was essential for the state to know what was happening with its citizens' sex, and the use they made use of it (Foucault, 1979b:25-6). Sex becomes a matter of police, a matter of government. It is constituted as a thing to be administered, a domain that calls for control and regulation. It is established as a field of empirical truth in which a whole web of analyses and knowledges were produced which took form in demography, biology, medicine, psychology, psychiatry, ethics, pedagogy, and other human sciences, without which the effects of bio-power would not be able to be implemented.

What must be noticed is that if these knowledges are able to serve the domination of the state, it is not through the formation of false ideologies but the constitution of a field of empirical truth. It is through the production rather than the negation of truth that power effects are produced. Foucault says, "The political question, to sum up, is not error,

illusion, alienated consciousness or ideology; it is truth itself" (Foucault, 1980b:133).

Foucault's problematization of truth would disconcert those who believe that "truth will make you free". From their perspective, if truth is problematized, on what basis shall we lay our hope for emancipation and freedom? on what basis does Foucault's critique stand? In Part III, I shall further elaborate the implications of Foucault's work, and discuss what we could do with truth.

#### 4.3 "Truth will make you free"?

Foucault's problematization of truth has been criticized as contradictory to the intent of his project.<sup>6.5</sup> Taylor argues that Foucault's project which aims at liberation, must require a notion of truth. Without a notion of truth, he says, Foucault's critique cannot be coherent.

The Foucaultian notion of power not only requires for its sense the correlative notions of truth and liberation, but even the standard link between them, which makes truth the condition of liberation. To speak of power, and to want to deny a place to 'liberation' and 'truth', as well as the link between them, is to speak incoherently. That is, indeed, the reason why Foucault seems to be contradictory himself in the passages ... (Taylor, 1986:93)

In this section, I shall respond to Taylor's criticism of Foucault's lack of a notion of truth. I argue that Foucault's work, indeed, as Taylor says, functions as unmasking, but what it unmasks is truth rather than falsehood. What he seeks to undermine is our will to truth. From the perspective of Foucault, we can no longer rely upon truth to make us free. I shall discuss what we could do with truth, and elaborate Foucault's insights for those who believe that "Truth will make us free".

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<sup>6.5</sup> Habermas assumes that a critique has to claim superiority according to the truth claim. In his view, Foucault's problematization of truth is contradictory to the intent of his project. He comments that "if the truth claims that Foucault raises for his genealogy of knowledge were in fact illusory and amounted to no more than the effects that this theory is capable of releasing within the circle of its adherents, then the entire undertaking of a critical unmasking of the human sciences would lose its point" (Habermas, 1987a:279).

Taylor (1986:90-93) argues that Foucault's critique of power requires not only notions of truth and liberation, but the standard link between them. Power, Taylor says, is considered in terms of its imposition on our significant desires, interests, and purposes which frustrates them, prevents them from fulfilment or even from formation. A critique of power hence must aim at some relative lifting of the impositions. This is what is understood as liberation. Liberation, Taylor claims, requires truth.<sup>7</sup> For power proceeds "by foisting illusion on us; it proceeds by disguises and masks; it proceeds thus by falsehood". He argues that the impositions of disciplinary power on our desires and purposes also involve false pretences. Truth is required for unmasking and lifting of the impositions of disciplinary power.

One can hardly deny that Foucault's work functions in a certain way as unmasking and relative lifting of constraints. For instance, his analysis of disciplinary power allows us to see how power actually works so as to loosen its grip on us.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, in focusing on the ways in which power operates, Foucault shows that power works through the production of truth rather than its negation. Therefore, while Taylor is

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<sup>7</sup> In a reply to Taylor's critique of Foucault, Patton (1989) points out that what Taylor has in mind is a negative freedom. Patton argues that Foucault is concerned with expanding the sphere of positive freedom rather than, as Taylor assumes, with enlarging the sphere of negative freedom. Patton says, "Foucault is not a philosopher of consciousness concerned to describe or to theorize the experience of attempting to overcome internal limits to freedom. Rather, his concern is with the external supports of the forms of social consciousness and being. He attempts to chart some of the institutions, practices and bodies of knowledge which help to define and to maintain particular kinds of individuality" (Patton, 1989:264). To understand the debate between Taylor and Patton, see Taylor, 1986; Patton, 1989; Taylor, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> In this sense, one may say that Foucault reveals the "truth" of the operation of power. As I shall point out later in the discussion, Foucault's work can be seen as having the truth effects of unmasking. Nevertheless, he refuses to consider his work as truth which unmasks, for he aims at questioning a whole tradition which represents truth as outside power, as lacking in power. Indeed, power, as Taylor says, proceeds by false pretences and masks, but this does not mean that power simply proceeds by falsehood. Foucault seeks to affirm that power proceeds by truth; power proceeds by the false pretences and masks of truth. In Taylor's view, if truth is produced by power and becomes its masks, truth has turned to be untruth. His view is based on the assumption that truth must be pure, innocent, and external to power. It is this assumption that Foucault seeks to attack.



correct to say that Foucault aims at unmasking, he overlooks the fact that what Foucault unmasks is not falsehood, but truth.

For Taylor, power proceeds by falsehood and hence we need truth to oppose power. Foucault's analysis of power, in contrast, shows that power works in a more complicated way. Foucault argues that power does not simply proceed by falsehood or a negation of truth, but rather by a production of truth. For him, the negative concept of power that Taylor holds is totally inadequate for the analysis of the mechanisms and effects of power. In order for power to be implemented effectively, power must be productive rather than repressive, positive rather than negative. In the discussion of the regulation of the population, Foucault shows that it is through the constitution of "sex" as a specific<sup>domain</sup> of empirical truth that power effects are achieved; in the discussion of the confessional practice, Foucault shows that it is through the production of a scientific knowledge of sexuality that the effects of normalizing power are induced. In order to understand how power effects are induced and maintained, Foucault argues that we should focus on the production of truth.

The problem of Taylor or those who believe that "Truth will make you free" not only lies in their failure to understand the ways in which power operates. Also, by assuming that power proceeds by falsehood, these theories of power in effect hide the actual procedures and mechanisms by which power operates. Therefore, what needs to be unmasked is the relationship between power and these theories. As Foucault's criticism of the juridical-discursive notion of power indicates, "power is tolerable only on the condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (Foucault, 1979b:86). What enables power to hide its mechanisms includes theorizations of power in terms of a negative concept of power and on the basis of the assumption that "truth will make us free".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Foucault criticizes the juridical-discursive theories of power in terms of their masking of the mechanisms of power: "The theory of sovereignty, and the organization of a legal code centred upon it, have allowed a system of right to be superimposed upon the mechanisms of discipline in such a way as to *conceal* its actual procedures, the element of domination

Taylor's theorization of power not only hides the actual procedure by which power operates, but also demonstrates a will to truth that Foucault seeks to undermine. What Foucault unmasks is not only truth but also the will to truth. For Taylor and those who believe that "truth will make you free", we are freed only by allowing truth to surface. They demand one to speak the truth, to produce true knowledge, and to construct the notion of truth. They demand the production of truth to perform the function of unmasking, but they fail to unmask the will to truth behind their demand. In Foucault's analysis, we see that a whole web of discourses of sex is produced based on the will to truth. These discourses require one to tell the truth of sex. "One goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell" (Foucault, 1979b:59). One is to search for the truth, to ponder the truth, to tell the truth, to submit to the power of truth.

It is this will to truth that governs our pursuit of knowledge. What preoccupies us is the division between true and false. Foucault argues that

when viewed from the level of a proposition, or the inside of a discourse, the division between true and false is neither arbitrary nor modifiable nor institutional nor violent. But when we view things on a different scale, when we ask the question of what this will to truth has been and constantly is, ... what is, in its very general form, the type of division which governs our will to know, then what we see taking shape is perhaps something like a system of exclusion, a historical, modifiable, and institutionally constraining system. (Foucault, 1970:54)

Not only should one be reminded of the will to truth that governs one's analytic practice, one should also notice the arbitrary, historical,

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inherent in its techniques and to guarantee to everyone, by virtue of the sovereignty of the State, the exercise of his proper sovereign rights. The Juridical systems -- and this applies to both their codification and to their theorizations -- have enabled sovereignty to be democratised through the constitution of a public right articulated upon collective sovereignty, while at the same time this democratization of sovereignty was fundamentally determined by and grounded in mechanisms of disciplinary coercion" (emphasis added; Foucault, 1980c:105). Also see Foucault, 1979b, p.86.

modifiable, and institutionally constraining character of the will to truth. According to Foucault, despite the fact that the will to truth has been present from ancient times to the present, it has taken different forms at different times. For the Greek in the sixth century B.C., he writes, the true discourse was pronounced by the one who spoke of right and according to the required ritual. The true discourse dispensed justice; it prophesied the future destiny of people. From the Platonic period, truth no longer resided in rituals or in positions of power, but in the utterance itself, its meaning, its object. In modern western societies, the will to truth takes form in the domination of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse. With the dominance of a scientific discourse, the operation of truth defines the range of objects to be known, the functions and the positions of the knowing subject. This will to truth rests on an institutional support. It is reinforced and renewed by the practices of pedagogy, like the system of books, publishing, libraries, and laboratories (Foucault, 1970:55-6).

Foucault contends that the will to truth exerts a power of constraint over other discourses. It is linked to a machinery which disqualifies those that fall below the standard of truth. In modern western societies, there are knowledges excluded because of their failure to meet the required standard of scientificity. Foucault refers to them as subjugated knowledges, that is, knowledges which "have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity". They include knowledges of the delinquent, or of the psychiatric patient, the ill person, and even the nurse and the doctor, which are marginalized by the science of medicine. These knowledges are local and specific, with no common meaning. What unites them is the fact that they are opposed by the well-established scientific knowledges (Foucault, 1980c:82).

In light of Foucault's work, Taylor's critique should be questioned if it contains a will to truth which has constraining effects on other discourses. Taylor's critique demands one to speak the truth. It condemns Foucault's project for its lack of a notion of truth; it charges Foucault as incoherent for



his refusal of appeal to truth. Foucault is fully aware of the charges, yet he still refuses to ground his work on the basis of truth. In performing the function of unmasking, Foucault avoids appealing to truth. For what he seeks to unmask is precisely how power works through the production of truth; what he seeks to undermine is the will to truth that underlines the demand for the production of truth.

Foucault understands his task as undermining the will to truth. In modern western societies, this will to truth takes the form of the dominance of science. In opposition to this will to truth, Foucault uses his genealogies for an insurrection of subjugated knowledges. He allies with "local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges" to oppose "the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchize and order knowledges in the name of some true knowledge or some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects" (Foucault, 1980c:83). In calling for an insurrection of subjugated knowledges, Foucault does not provide a theory to support them or unite them according to a notion of truth. In his view, this would be a danger of constructing, with our own hands, the kind of unitary discourse that we struggle against (Foucault, 1980c:86). Foucault asserts that in the struggle against the domination effects of the scientific discourse in our society, we cannot rely upon global theories like Marxism and psychoanalysis, for they belong exactly to the unitary body of scientific discourse that we struggle against. Nor should we construct a global theory on our own. He insists on maintaining the local and specific character of criticism, one which indicates "an autonomous, non-centralized kind of theoretical production", one "whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought" (Foucault, 1980c:81).

In order to undermine the will to truth, Foucault refuses to produce truth. He does not see his work as truths, but rather as "fictions". He says,

I am fully aware that I have never written anything other than fictions. For all that, I would not want to say that they were outside the truth. It seems plausible to me to make fictions work within truth, to introduce truth-

effects within a fictional discourse, and in some way to make discourse arouse, "fabricate," something which does not yet exist, thus to fiction something. One "fictions" history starting from a political reality that renders it true, one "fictions" a politics that does not yet exist starting from a historical truth (Foucault 1979c:75).

While these fictions may produce truth effects, for instance, they may function like truths to unmask, Foucault maintains that what he seeks is "to introduce truth-effects within a *fictional* discourse". He does not consider it as effects within a truth discourse. He wants his work to fabricate a new forms of politics. One may say that in this sense, his work functions like truth which guides politics. Nevertheless, Foucault sees <sup>that</sup> it "fictions" a new form of politics. He does not consider it as truth which grounds politics.

Foucault's work shows that we can no longer rely upon truth to provide the basis of hope. "[T]ruth isn't outside power, or lacking in power ... Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints. And it induces regular effects of power" (Foucault, 1980b:131). If truth is shown to be internally related to power, shall we reject truth once and for all? what shall we do with truth? Foucault demonstrates an example of how he avoids appealing to a notion of truth in his work. Nevertheless, there is not just a single way of resistance. Instead of refusing to play the game of truth, one may seek to play it in a different way. As Foucault says: "We escaped then a domination of truth, not by playing a game that was a complete stranger to the game of truth, but in playing it otherwise or in playing another game, another set, other trumps in the game of truth" (Foucault, 1988a:15).

I suggest that one may seek to play another game in the game of truth. In a game of truth, of course, one has to recognize that there are truths. Nevertheless, truths should not be considered as innocent, pure, and external to power. Instead they should be seen in terms of a multiplicity of discourses whose truth claims are localized and should be played with an

ironic consciousness of their own relativity and relation to power.<sup>10</sup> One should not treat truth as an innocent and secure basis on which one is to oppose power. Rather one can play upon truth claims in struggles against power. In this sense, one may not need to reject truth once and for all. Instead, one should consider truth in terms of a politics of discourse, a politics of truth.<sup>11</sup>

Let us look at what is meant by a politics of discourse or a politics of truth. According to Foucault, discourse is conceived as tactical elements which operate in the field of power relations. The tactical function that a discourse performs is neither uniform nor stable. Sometimes a discourse serves power and other times it resists power. Foucault says,

discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it ... discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. (Foucault, 1979b:101)

He gives an example of the appearance of discourses of homosexuality in the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the discourses provided the condition for an advance of social control into this area of perversity; on the other hand, it also made possible a "reverse" discourse. Using the same vocabularies and categories by which it was disqualified, homosexuality began to speak for itself, to demand the recognition of its legitimacy and naturalness (Foucault, 1979b:101).

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<sup>10</sup> Rorty considers Foucault's insights in terms of his ironic stance toward the final vocabulary -- the vocabulary that can have no noncircular argumentative recourse when it is questioned, such as the terms 'true', 'good', 'beautiful', 'progressive'. Rorty elaborates that an ironist is aware of the contingency and fragility of the final vocabulary and of the fact that these terms are subject to change. When an ironist phrases her/his argument in another final vocabulary, s/he does not think that this vocabulary is closer to the reality or truth, but is simply playing the new off against the old. An ironist fears that s/he would be limited by the vocabulary in which s/he inherited in the socialization, and s/he would experiment with other vocabularies so as to re-create her/himself. See his discussion of the ironist elements that he finds useful in Foucault's work; in Rorty, 1989, Chapter 3.

<sup>11</sup> Foucault says that each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth. For his discussion of the regime of truth in modern western societies; see Foucault, 1980b, pp.131-3.



One cannot attempt an a priori classification of discourse according to white-and-black categories. It is not possible to draw a line between discourses which are inherently bad and serve power on the one hand, and those which are inherently liberating and resist power on the other. In a politics of discourse, all discourses are open to contradictory uses. They may be used to serve power or to resist power. One cannot simply assume that a discourse of truth is more safe and less possible to be invested by power. For power could invest all discourses. There may be discourses which talk about the design of some projects in modifying the constraint of a certain power. Nevertheless, none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically, that liberty will be established by the project itself. Foucault asserts that the liberty of individuals are never assured by theories, institutions, and laws that are intended to provide them. On the contrary, these theories, institutions, and laws are often capable of being turned around (Foucault, 1986e:245).

In this sense, one should not simply rely upon truth, or a truth discourse to provide us with freedom. Truth, or a discourse of truth, is not by its nature inherently liberating. Freedom is not established by truth itself. If truth makes us free, it is perhaps through one's engaging in a politics of truth. One has to negotiate the meanings of truth, and to play upon the truth claims in the opposition of power. For instance, the discourse of homosexuality makes possible an advance of social control into this area of perversity. Individuals are judged in truth their nature of sexuality and whether it requires therapeutic intervention. When homosexuality begins to speak for itself, the same vocabularies could be used. They reveal the truth of their sexual nature. They might argue that, like heterosexuals, they never choose their own sexuality; they are born to be homosexual. Their sexuality is just as natural and normal as that of heterosexuals. In the name of truth they oppose power that has been imposed on them. The truth discourse is turned around and used to fight against power.

One should not imagine that truth is inherently liberating. Nor should one think that truth is absolutely liberating. A truth discourse may be used to serve power or to resist power. Nevertheless, both uses are within power. When a discourse is used to oppose power, it does not destroy power. On the contrary, it induces effects of power. In our example of the resistance of homosexuality, by demanding the recognition of its naturalness in the name of truth, it results in a wider acceptance of homosexuality. Nevertheless, its reliance upon the normal-abnormal dichotomy may induce effects of normalizing power. For example, it is claimed that those who are born homosexual should be regarded as normal as those who are born heterosexual. Then, how about those who choose to be homosexual? They would be classified as abnormal and regarded as in need of therapeutic treatment. Therefore, resistance is never a domain that is absolutely free from power. If one plays upon truth to oppose power, one should not imagine truth as absolutely liberating. Resistance can provide the condition of existence for an exercise of power. This is where attack should be launched again. The fight goes on; it never ends.

To sum up, in demanding that Foucault ground his critique in a notion of truth, Taylor himself has put his faith in truth and believes that "Truth will make us free". He overlooks the fact that truth is neither absolutely nor inherently liberating. We should not imagine that truth will bring us to a state which is power-free. Instead, truth often induces effects of power. We cannot expect truth itself to establish liberty. Rather liberty is what must be exercised. If truth can ever make us free, it is because we exercise our freedom in opposing power by engaging in a politics of truth. While truth is not, as people might imagine, pure, innocent, and outside power, what we could do is to enable truth to function in a different way in a field of power relations. We may play upon truth claims against power; nevertheless, they should be played with an ironic consciousness of their own relativity and relation to power.

## Conclusion

I would summarize Habermas's critique of knowledge in three points. Firstly, guided by a juridico-discursive mode of analysis, Habermas considers science problematic only when it transgresses the boundary and invades others' domains. Science is seen as unproblematic as long as it operates within its own domain. Secondly, Habermas's discourse model further asserts that scientific knowledge in itself is unproblematic. Knowledge is portrayed as external to power; the production of knowledge is seen as outside power. Thirdly, while knowledge may join hands with power, the power effects produced are regarded as external to knowledge. It is ideologies rather than knowledge that are responsible for the power effects. Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge, I contend, challenges each of these assertions.

From the perspective of a strategic model, which focuses on the ways in which power effects are produced, Foucault sees that knowledge can be linked to power in a relationship of constitutive interdependence. As the example of sexuality shows, the constitution of a field of knowledge depends on power relations establishing sexuality as an object, and conversely, power can take sexuality as a target only when it is invested with cognitive relations. Power and knowledge are shown to be linked in a constitutive interdependence. Power constitutes the internal condition of the possibility of certain knowledges, and these knowledges provide the means without which the exercise of power would not be possible. Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge implies several challenges for Habermas.

Firstly, in contrast to what Habermas's critique assumes, these knowledges are not problematic only when they illegitimately invade the domains of others; they are always problematic since they are linked to power in a constitutive relation. Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge in effect achieves a radical problematization of knowledge. His



problematization of knowledge, unlike Habermas's, does not depend on a critique of knowledge as illegitimate. Nor does it depend on a critique of knowledge as false knowledge or ideology. Instead it is based on an examination of the internal relation between knowledge and power.

If there are knowledges internally linked to power, one can put into question Habermas's discourse model which represents knowledge as external to power. Foucault's studies demonstrate that it is power, its demands, its techniques, its relations, that constitute the internal condition for the existence of certain knowledges. In contrast to what Habermas's discourse model represents, power is not lacking in the production of knowledge. On the contrary, it is power that produces certain knowledges. The second kind of Foucault's challenge hence consists in his analysis of power's production of knowledge. He urges us to "abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests". Habermas's discourse theory, I suggest, can be considered in terms of this tradition.

Foucault's third kind of insight lies in his analysis of the ways in which power effects are produced. In contrast to Habermas's critique, knowledges do not stand originally outside power and then fall a prey to power in order to produce power effects. Nor do they lend themselves to false ideologies in order to produce power effects. Instead these knowledges are the internal condition of power, without which the exercise of power would not be possible. The power effects are internally linked to these knowledges; they are directly implied in these knowledges. The problem is no longer ideologies or falsehood, but rather true knowledges, truth itself.

According to Foucault's analysis, we can no longer assume that truth will make us free. The comfort that Habermas provides us in legitimate knowledge and in true knowledge is exposed as being misguided. Instead of laying our hope in truth, what we should do is to engage in a politics of

discourse, in a politics of truth. As Foucault says, "it's not a battle 'on behalf' of truth but a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role which it plays".(Foucault, 1980b:132).

## SUBJECT AND POWER

Foucault suggests that we leave aside the question of "what legitimate power" and focus instead on the processes and mechanisms through which power effects are produced. In Chapter 4, we discussed the role of knowledge in the production of power effects. In this chapter, we turn to the role of "subject" and discuss Foucault's analysis of the relationship between the subject and power.

Foucault's approach, I contend, is not to ask who dominates and who are dominated. Nor is it to construct a theory of the subject as the basis of resistance. Instead he examines how power works at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors. In these processes, he sees that subjects are gradually, progressively, and materially constituted. In contrast to one's representing the subject vis-a-vis power, Foucault shows that the subject is one of power's prime effects.

One cannot deny the novelty of Foucault's analysis of the subject and power. Nevertheless, what kinds of challenge could it possibly pose to Habermas, who claims that his project has moved away from the philosophy of the subject?

Habermas contends that one should replace the paradigm of the philosophy of the subject with the paradigm of intersubjectivity. In the paradigm of intersubjectivity, the notion of communicative reason replaces the notion of an isolated, autonomous cognitive subject in the discussion of power. However, as I shall argue in Part I, since the notion of communicative reason relies upon an a priori notion of the rational subject who possesses certain linguistic competences, how far his project has moved away from the philosophy of the subject is doubtful. Moreover, its reliance upon a certain notion of modern

## Chapter 5

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subjectivity allows me to use Foucault's work to comment on his project.

What kinds of challenge does Foucault's work pose to Habermas's theory? I suggest that one may read Foucault's insights in terms of the thesis of "an exclusion of the other". That is, Foucault shows that the constitution of subjects often involves an exclusion of the other. In constituting and identifying ourselves as the rational, the normal, the sane, the nondangerous subjects, we have to identify the irrational, the abnormal, the insane, the dangerous, and exclude or condemn them as the other. Habermas's theory, which presupposes a notion of modern rational subjectivity, can be questioned in terms of its exclusion of the other. As noted by White (1986), in the formation of modern subjectivity, there are certain aspects of subjectivity that have been systematically excluded and devalued in the modern world. "If Foucault is right about the exclusion and devaluation of the body and the aesthetic-expressive capacities, then critical theory is obliged to press this question upon itself" (White, 1986:424). In Part II, I shall press this question upon Habermas's theory, and examine the implication of Habermas's discussion of the rational and responsible subject in terms of an exclusion of the other.

While this is a way to draw insights from Foucault's work, nevertheless, I argue, it brings us back to a negative concept of power that Foucault seeks to surpass. It assumes that if Habermas's project has a problem, it has to do with its *negating* or excluding a certain subjectivity. Moreover, when power is represented as negative, one may, as White does, turn to the question of how to submit power to the rule of right. In this way, one would search for a principle of legitimacy, which Foucault's work refuses to provide. In order to appreciate Foucault's insights, I suggest that we should read his work from the perspective of a strategic model which emphasizes the productive aspect of power.

From the perspective of the strategic model, we are concerned not so much with an exclusion of the other as with a production of certain subjectivities. For it is through the production of subjects that power begins to operate. Therefore, I argue, instead of merely pressing upon

itself the question of an exclusion of the other, Habermas's theory should be questioned in terms of whether it involves a production of certain subjectivities, and whether there is a tactical integration of its production of subjectivities with the modern practices of power-knowledge.

In Chapter 4, Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge and his problematization of knowledge have been shown. In this chapter, I discuss Foucault's problematization of the subject and introduce the matrix of knowledge-power-subjectivity according to which power operates. Facing the modern alliance of knowledge-power-subjectivity, what can we do to undermine the mechanisms of power? In his later works, Foucault's discussion of the Greek ethics points to an aesthetic subject. Is he, as his critics understand, providing us with a theory of the subject that grounds critique and resistance? If the answer is no, in what way does Foucault's discussion help us reflect upon resistance of modern power? Part III is devoted to answering these questions.

### **5.1 Habermas: Subjectivity, Intersubjectivity and Power**

Habermas sees that there are unresolved problems with the philosophy of the subject and understands his project as offering a solution to those problems. Part I considers the solution that Habermas offers and discusses whether his project has successfully moved away from the philosophy of the subject.

In the philosophy of the subject, he states, there is a thematization of two incompatible aspects of the subject: the transcendental aspect and the empirical aspect. On the one hand, the subject is one which adopts an objectifying attitude that an observer assumes toward entities in the external world. In this sense, the subject views itself as the dominating counterpart to the world. Nevertheless, on the other hand, it is an empirical subject, and it has to view itself as entity within the world. In this sense, it is also the object of knowledge. The thematization of

these two aspects of the subject reveals the hectic to and fro between the transcendental and empirical modes of inquiry, and the unresolved back-and-forth between the transcendental I and the empirical I. The movements between these two aspects of the subject, Habermas contends, are as inevitable as they are incompatible. In his view, Foucault's discussion of the three doubles in modern thought -- the transcendental/empirical double, the cogito/unthought double, the double of the return/retreat of the origin -- once again shows the symptoms of the exhaustion of the paradigm of the philosophy of the subject but does not offer any solution (Habermas, 1987a:294-5). Habermas claims that his project provides the way out of the philosophy of the subject.

What solution does Habermas offer? He claims that the paradigm of the knowledge of objects has to be replaced by the paradigm of mutual understanding between subjects capable of speech and action. With a shift to the latter paradigm,

the objectifying attitude in which the knowing subject regards itself as it would entities in the external world is no longer privileged. Fundamental to the paradigm of mutual understanding is, rather, the performative attitude of participants in interaction, who coordinate their plans for action by coming to an understanding about something in the world. (Habermas, 1987a:296)

The solution that Habermas offers is: to replace subjectivity with intersubjectivity. Instead of a reflection upon an essential subjectivity, he seeks for a reflection upon the rules deposited in successful utterances that account for intersubjectivity or people's understanding with one another. He carries out a rational reconstruction of the "rules that a competent speaker must master in order to form grammatical sentences and to utter them in an acceptable way" (Habermas, 1979:26). Besides the rules for the formation of grammatically acceptable sentences,<sup>1</sup> Habermas reconstructs the condition under which the

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<sup>1</sup> The rules for the formation of grammatically acceptable sentences include the use of propositional sentences to represent a state of affairs; the use of intentional verbs, modal forms, and so on to express an intention; and the use of performative phrases, illocutionary indicators, and the like to establish a legitimate interpersonal relation (Habermas, 1979:28).



hearer is motivated to take an affirmative position to the utterance. He states that the acceptability of an illocutionary act depends upon a condition: the speaker's guarantee for securing claims to validity. A speaker can motivate a hearer to accept the speech-act because the speaker can assume the warranty to provide convincing reasons when challenged or criticized by the hearer (Habermas, 1991:297-302).

Habermas argues that as there is a speech-act-immanent-obligation to provide grounds for one's claims, reason is implied in the structure of language. In his view, to rationally motivate a hearer to accept one's claim requires one to ground the claim on the basis of the mere force of the better argument. This presupposes the notion of an ideal speech situation in which power relations and other constraints are absent in the argumentation, so that the consensus arrived at is based on reason. In this sense, Habermas argues, the redemption of validity claims in our speech-acts points to a notion of communicative reason.

For Habermas, the turn to the paradigm of intersubjectivity and the introduction of a notion of communicative reason not only provide the way out of the paradigm of the philosophy of the subject, but also establish a new foundation in the discussion of power. Habermas views power both in terms of a subject-object relation and a relation between human subjects. Nevertheless, no matter whether power is viewed in terms of a subject-object relation or a relation between human subjects, Habermas asserts that the success of power is based on truth. Instead of presupposing an isolated autonomous knowing subject in the discussion of truth and power, Habermas suggests a notion of communicative reason as the basis of power.

When power is conceived from a subject-object relation, power refers to the ability to bring about a certain effect upon the object. A success in the exercise of power means a mastery of the object, and this, Habermas maintains, is regulated by the truth of judgements (Habermas, 1987a:274). While power's truth dependency has to remain, he nevertheless contends that we no longer need to presuppose an isolated, autonomous knowing subject. In his view, the paradigm of intersubjectivity allows us to talk about truth and power in a way that no longer relies upon the repertoire of the philosophy of the subject.

While truth is characterized by its ability to compel universally and rationally, in the paradigm of intersubjectivity, it no longer compels through monological consciousness, but rather through dialogue and argumentation between members of a linguistic community. Truth, according to Habermas, is a truth claim, that is, statements asserted to be true in a linguistic community. Being a truth claim, its validity has to be affirmed through intersubjective justification. The condition of truth, in the paradigm of intersubjectivity, is the rational consensus of members of a linguistic community. Truth, that is, the basis for the success of power, is to be grounded in communicative reason. The notion of communicative reason hence replaces the presupposition of an isolated, autonomous knowing subject in the discussion of power in a subject-object relation.

For Habermas, the paradigm of intersubjectivity provides a new basis for the discussion of power not only in a subject-object relation, but also in a relation between human subjects. If the success of power over nature or natural objects is expressed by mastery, the success of power between human subjects, Habermas holds, is represented by an acceptance of that power relation as legitimate. The notion of legitimacy, in his view, implies that justification has to be given for domination. To assert that the domination is legitimate is to lay a claim to its validity. This claim to legitimacy, like the truth claim discussed above, has to be examined, tested and justified. It is only when the claim is supported by the mere force of the better argument that the legitimacy of the power relation is backed by reason (Habermas, 1976:95-102). Power, through the notion of legitimacy, is once again grounded in communicative reason.

Habermas believes that the paradigm of intersubjectivity has overcome the problems of the philosophy of the subject. While in the paradigm of the philosophy of the subject there are unresolved tensions between the transcendental subject and the empirical subject and between transcendental and empirical modes of inquiry, Habermas claims, the separation between the transcendental and the empirical no longer applies to his reconstructive science in the paradigm of



intersubjectivity.<sup>2</sup> In place of an intuitive analysis of self-consciousness and a reflectively objectified knowledge, he states, we have a recapitulating reconstruction of knowledge already employed.

Because such reconstructive attempts are no longer aimed at a realm of intelligible beyond that of appearances, but at the actually exercised rule-knowledge that is deposited in correctly generated utterances, the ontological separation between the transcendental and the empirical is no longer applicable. ... In this way, the spell of an unresolved back-and-forth between two aspects of self-thematization that are as inevitable as they are incompatible is broken. Consequently, we do not need hybrid theories any more to close the gap between the transcendental and empirical. (Habermas, 1987a:298)

Habermas's claim that his reconstructive project has moved away from the transcendental philosophy, I suggest, can be questioned. Habermas understands that what his project does is to render explicit, *"from the perspective of those participating in discourses and interaction"*, the pretheoretical grasp of rules on the part of competent speakers (emphasis added, Habermas, 1987a:296). Nevertheless, we can trace in his work that from time to time Habermas is not exactly analyzing from the perspective of those participating in discourses and interaction. Rather he raises himself above the participants, engages in a monological reflection, and proclaims the truth about language from above. Take an example of his claim: "The human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori.... Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus" (Habermas, 1978:314). He proclaims the telos of language; he proclaims what is inherent in linguistic understanding. Communicative rationality, for him, is not a value, or a decision agreed upon by participants. It is

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<sup>2</sup> McCarthy discusses Habermas's reconstructive project as a "transformed transcendental philosophy". He points out that it is, on the one hand, like Kant's transcendental philosophy which aims at disclosing the conditions of possibility, but the focus shifts from the possibility of experiencing objects to the possibility of reaching understanding; and on the other hand, an inquiry of empirical speakers and successful utterances. See McCarthy, 1984, pp.278-9.



portrayed as what is inherent in linguistic understanding, as something that is to be apprehended a priori, as foundations that any speaker "cannot avoid having recourse, intuitively, to".<sup>3</sup>

One should appreciate Habermas's diagnosis of the problem of the philosophy of the subject and his intention to provide the way out through the turn to a paradigm of intersubjectivity. Nevertheless, the basic flaw of his project lies in the fact that it is oriented toward not an analysis of an intersubjective understanding of participants in a certain community, but rather an a priori notion of universal communicative competence. Habermas holds that the illocutionary force of an acceptable speech act cannot be traced back to any particular institutional or normative contexts; it consists in the fact that it can move a hearer on the basis of the speech-act-immanent obligation to provide justification for claims. This conception of illocutionary force, as Miller points out, causes the failure of Habermas's project to advance beyond a philosophy of the subject. Instead of having intersubjectivity as the basis, Habermas's analysis relies upon an a priori notion of the competent speaking subject as the basis for intersubjectivity. In Miller's words,

Illocutionary force depends on a notion of the essential capacities of subjects which provide the conditions of possibility of communication. Without these attributes illocutionary force, and indeed communication itself, would not be able to function. It is, I argue, this attempt to elaborate the notion of intersubjectivity through the concept of illocutionary force which undercuts Habermas's attempt to produce a universal pragmatics. To the extent that illocutionary force is conceived as separate from normative and institutional conditions of possibility, the 'pragmatic' dimension of speech is, I suggest, thereby excluded from a universal pragmatics. The

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<sup>3</sup> Habermas says: "Whenever speaking and acting subjects want to arrive purely by way of argument at a decision, they cannot avoid having recourse, intuitively, to foundations that can be explained with the help of the concept of communicative rationality. Participants in discourse do not have to come first to an agreement about this foundation: indeed, a decision for the rationality inherent in linguistic understanding is not even possible. In communicative rationality we are always already oriented to those validity-claims, on the intersubjective recognition of which consensus is possible" (Habermas, 1982a:226-7).

'universal' dimension of speech, which in turn depends on an a priori conception of the attributes of subjects as rational beings, becomes the absolute basis of intersubjectivity. In this way intersubjectivity is restated as a transcendental foundation for critical theory. (Miller, 1987:78)

Therefore, far from being able to move away from the paradigm of the philosophy of the subject, Habermas's theory of communicative action actually relies upon an a priori notion of the subject. In particular, it presupposes the notion of a "responsible" and "rational" subject who has certain attributes and capacities. Human beings are conceived as *responsible* subjects "who, as members of a communication-community, can orient their actions to intersubjectively recognized validity claims" (Habermas, 1991:14). Moreover, throughout Habermas's work, human beings are characterized as *rational* speaking and acting subjects who are willing and able to provide grounds or justification for their assertions, claims, and expressed feelings. Rationality is seen as a disposition of any speaking and acting subjects and is expected to be expressed in behavior.<sup>4</sup>

The dependence upon an a priori theory of the subject as the basis of intersubjectivity has important consequences for Habermas's discussion of power. In contrast to his claim that the paradigm of intersubjectivity provides an alternative basis for the discussion of power, it is this a priori notion of the subject that provides an essential basis for legitimate power. Legitimate power, for Habermas, is not simply based upon the intersubjectivity of participants in a certain community; it is to do with rational subjects who engage in discussion in the pursuit of consensus. Illegitimate power, on the other hand, is to

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, Habermas claims: "In contexts of communicative action, we call someone rational not only if he is able to put forth an assertion and, when criticized, to provide grounds for it by pointing to appropriate evidence, but also if he is following an established norm and is able, when criticized, to justify his action by explicating the given situation in light of legitimate expectations. We even call someone rational if he makes known a desire or an intention, expresses a feeling or a mood, shares a secret, confesses a deed, etc., and is then able to reassure critics in regard to the revealed experience by drawing practical consequences from it and behaving consistently thereafter" (Habermas, 1991:15).

do with distorted communication which negates this modern rational subjectivity. In this sense, Habermas's communicative concept of power still privileges a certain notion of modern rational subjectivity as the basis of hope.

Foucault's work, in contrast, does not take for granted any presupposition of modern subjectivity. On the contrary, he seeks to show the specific conditions of existence of certain modern subjects. The subject, for Foucault, is the product of discourses and practices, the product of power relations. Foucault's way of examining the relation between power and the subject, I argue, has implications for Habermas's project. Instead of representing the subject vis-a-vis power, as Habermas does with his communicative concept of power, Foucault shows that the subject is one of power's prime effects. Far from being able to provide us a basis of hope, notions of modern rational subjectivity are shown to be part of the problem.

## **5.2 Foucault's Analysis of Subject and Power and its Challenge to Habermas**

In order to analyze the relationships that can exist between constitution of subjects and practices of power, Foucault thinks that it is necessary to reject an a priori theory of the subject. He says,

What I refused was precisely that you first of all set up a theory of the subject ... and that, beginning from the theory of the subject, you come to pose the question of knowing, for example, how such and such a form of knowledge was possible. (Foucault, 1988a:10)

What Foucault wants to know is how subjects emerge, how subjects constitute themselves, and the way in which the constitution of subjects is linked to power.

What insights does Foucault's work have for Habermas? First of all, Habermas's theory, which relies upon an a priori notion of the



rational subject, is bound to be inadequate in capturing the relationships that can exist between power and the constitution of the rational subject. In the following discussion, I shall first present Foucault's novel analysis of the subject and power. Then I shall discuss the challenges it has for Habermas's theory. I argue that there can be more than one way of using Foucault's work, and suggest that the challenge can be posed from the perspective of a strategic model.

### *Foucault: on subject and power*

Foucault shows how mechanisms of power are involved in the constitution or production of subjects. For instance, in *Discipline and Punish*, he demonstrates that discipline 'makes' individuals. That is, in disciplinary processes, certain bodies, certain gestures, certain desires come to be identified and constituted as individual subjects. Disciplinary power is, on the one hand, a power of subjection, which subjects the body to a set of procedures, analyses, norms and controls, and on the other hand, an individualizing power, the operation of which involves creation of a subject with identity and individuality. By what means does disciplinary power operate as a power of subjection and an individualizing power?

Disciplinary power is one which employs a series of techniques and methods in order to ensure the meticulous control of the operations of the body. It operates according to a codification which partitions as closely as possible space, time, and movement. Through a partitioning of space, bodies are individualized and put under observation and control. The spatial arrangement serves the function of individualization and classification. Each is defined by the place it occupies, and by the gap that separates it from others. The spatial partitioning enables one to have its own place, both in the sense of an architectural boundary and in the sense of a rank, a place in an hierarchy. Hence, "discipline is an art of rank". The rank expresses one's status and value, knowledge and ability. Each is to identify

oneself according to the rank, as what happened in the classroom or college.

In the eighteenth century, 'rank begins to define the great form of distribution of individuals in the educational order: rows or ranks of pupils in the class, corridors, courtyards; rank attributed to each pupil at the end of each task and each examination; ... And, in this ensemble of compulsory alignments, each pupil, according to his age, his performance, his behavior, occupies sometimes one rank, sometimes another; he moves constantly over a series of compartments -- some of these are ideal compartments, marking a hierarchy of knowledge and ability, others express the distribution of values or merits in material terms in the space of the college or classroom. It is a perpetual movement in which individuals replace one another in a space marked off by aligned intervals. (Foucault, 1977:146-7)

The partitioning of time achieves similar purposes of subjection and individualization. Temporal control over bodies is achieved by implementing time-tables, which organize and govern individuals' activities down to the smallest intervals. Moreover, as Clifford (1989) elaborates, the regulation of time fosters the production of temporal norms -- expectations regarding the length of time necessary to accomplish a task, master a skill, or recover from an illness. Individuals are expected to conform to these norms and they are judged according to the norms. For example, students are expected to master certain educational knowledge and skills within the duration of an academic year. They are classified and ranked according to whether they meet such temporal demands and expectations.

Disciplinary time is the time of regulated, controlled, seriated, normalized activity -- a time which does not merely accompany or mark the activity of individuals, but which subjects them to temporal demands and expectations through which they are defined and individualized. (Clifford, 1989:91-2)

The partitioning of movement or the temporal elaboration of an act also serves similar functions. By means of a calculated control of movement, gesture and behavior, the subjectivity is constituted and

regulated in a material way. What is produced is not simply a conditioned or manipulated subject, but rather one with aptitudes and capacities. As seen in the training of handwriting, while the body is subject to power and control, what is produced is a capable subject. Good handwriting

presupposed a gymnastics -- a whole routine whose rigorous code invests the body in its entirety, from the points of the feet to the tip of the index finger ... The teacher will place the pupils in the posture that they should maintain when writing, and will correct it either by sign or otherwise, when they change their position. (Foucault, 1979a:152)

As a result, a capable subject is produced, one which is capable of good handwriting. This is what Foucault tries to show -- the productive side of disciplinary power. That is, the exercise of disciplinary power brings about efficiency and utility; and the operation of disciplinary power involves a production rather than a suppression of the subject.

The chief function of the disciplinary power is to 'train' ... It does not link forces together in order to reduce them; it seeks to bind them together in such a way as to multiply and use them. ... Instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units. It 'trains' the moving, confused, useless multitudes of bodies and forces into a multiplicity of individual elements ... (Foucault, 1979a:170)

In short, the operation of disciplinary power involves a production rather than a negation of subjectivity, a fostering rather than a suppression of individuality. The subjects produced by discipline possess capabilities and individualities. In addition, they are concrete and real, each linked to specific practices, institutions, and bodies of knowledge. These subjects include the student, the soldier, the factory worker, the prisoner. Through processes of hierarchization and normalization, these subjects are further differentiated and individualized from one another: the over-achiever, the delinquent, the recidivist, the deserter, the normal, the abnormal.



In particular, Foucault (1979a:251-6) elaborates the production of a new class of subjects -- the delinquent -- which made possible the penitentiary function of the prison. In order for the penitentiary apparatus to exercise power, it requires the production of an entirely new class of subjects. The penitentiary apparatus, of course, also receives convicted persons and offenders; nevertheless, the object to which it applies itself is rather different from the convicted offender: it is the delinquent. The delinquent is to be distinguished from the offender by the fact that it is not as much his act as his life that is relevant in characterizing him. This amounts to an exercise in biographical investigation. The observation of the delinquent goes beyond the circumstances under which the crime is committed to his life. It seeks the causes of his crime in his psychology, social position and upbringing. A delinquent is one with a slow formation. The 'criminal' character exists before and even outside the crime. At the junction of the penal and psychiatric discourses is the formation of the notion of the 'dangerous' individual.<sup>5</sup> The delinquent is defined as the dangerous. Through processes of hierarchization and normalization, these subjects are further differentiated according to their degree of danger. For example, with Ferrus's classification, Foucault writes, the delinquent is further differentiated into three types, each is conceived in terms of the degree and nature of danger, and accordingly linked to a particular practice of power-knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Foucault, 1978, for an elaboration of the psychiatrization of criminal danger in the 19th century.

<sup>6</sup> Foucault writes, "there are those who are endowed 'with intellectual resources above the average of intelligence that we have established', but who have been perverted either by the 'tendencies of their organization' and a 'native predisposition', or by 'pernicious logic', an 'iniquitous morality', a 'dangerous attitude to social duties'. Those that belong to this category require isolation day and night, solitary exercise ... The second category is made up of 'vicious, stupid or passive convicts, who have been led into evil by indifference to either shame or honor, through cowardice, that is to say, laziness, and because of a lack of resistance to bad incitements'; the regime suitable to them is not so much that of punishment as of education, and if possible mutual education: isolation at night, work in common during the day ... Lastly, there are the 'inept or incapable convicts', who are therefore incapable of competing in work with intelligent workers and who, having neither enough education to know their social duties, nor enough intelligence to understand this fact or to struggle against their personal instincts, are led to evil by their very incapacity. For these, solitude would merely encourage their inertia; they must therefore live in common ..." (Foucault, 1979a:253-4).

In the eighteenth century, Foucault writes, side by side with disciplinary power, another form of bio-power emerged which was oriented toward a regulatory control over the population. This form of bio-power, he argues, operated in <sup>the</sup> past through the production of subjects. As I shall elaborate below, the subjects produced included the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult.

With an emergence of this bio-power, between the state and the individual, sex became a public issue.<sup>7</sup> A whole web of discourses, analyses, knowledges centering on sex were produced. Through these discourses, a norm of sexual development from childhood to old age was defined, and all the possible deviations were carefully described. Not only the sexuality of the adult and adolescent was examined, but also the sexuality of the child, and the mad people. Foucault points out that there were four great strategies developed in the eighteenth century which formed specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex: hysterization of women's bodies, pedagogization of children's sex, socialization of procreative behavior, and psychiatrization of perverse pleasure. Each of these strategies privileged certain targets as objects of knowledge and points for intervention, and in doing so, each produced a certain subject: the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult (Foucault, 1979b:103-5).

Foucault's work analyzes the relationships between power and the production of subjects. What kinds of insights does it have for Habermas's theory? I would like to point out that there can be two different ways of drawing insights from Foucault's work: one emphasizes the negative aspect of power; the other focuses on the

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<sup>7</sup> This form of bio-power focuses on "population" as an economic and political problem: population as wealth, population as manpower, population balanced between its growth and the resources it demanded. At the heart of this economic and political problem of population was sex: it was necessary to analyze the birth rate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the ways of making them fertile and sterile, the effects of unmarried life. Sex became a matter of public interest, a thing to be administered. "It was essential that the state know what was happening with its citizen's sex, and the use they made of it, but also that each individual be capable of controlling the use he made of it" (Foucault, 1979b:25-6).

productive side of power. From the former perspective, one sees that the constitution of subjects is always linked to a negation and subjugation of the other.<sup>8</sup> From the latter perspective, in contrast, one sees that power does not merely negate, it also produces. This perspective emphasizes the production of subjectivities as a mechanism through which power operates. In the following sections, I shall discuss each of these perspectives and show the kinds of challenge they pose to Habermas's theory.

### *Foucault's challenge: an exclusion of the other*

Foucault understands his project as an attempt to show how we have indirectly constituted ourselves through the exclusion of some others: criminals, mad people, and so on. In constituting and identifying ourselves as the nondangerous, the good subjects, we have to identify the dangerous and the bad subjects as the other. The production of a class of dangerous subjects -- the delinquent -- is connected to the constitution of ourselves as the nondangerous, the good subjects. "The other" exists, only to be condemned, excluded, and transformed.

In constituting and identifying ourselves, as the sane, the normal, we have to identify "the other" -- the insane, the abnormal. "The other" refers not only to other people, but also to other selves inside us. The constitution of ourselves, for instance, as the rational subject is accomplished by a subjugation of other selves inside us and an exclusion of them as the irrational. Foucault says, "the subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others" (Foucault, 1982:208).

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<sup>8</sup> Love (1989:276-8) argues that Foucault allows us to see "subjectivity is already subjugation". The problem of Habermas's theory, she contends, is that it fails to protect otherness within self and within society. She argues that the debate between Habermas and Foucault defines the tasks of social and political theory by raising some important questions, one of which is: When does subjectivity become subjection? See Love, 1989; for a discussion of the debate between Habermas and Foucault.



Connolly (1987:106) describes the division within oneself as a bifurcated self. He points out that, on the one hand, we have an autonomous, rational, and responsible agent which endorses the normative order of the modern society, and when the self breaks the codes to which it has consented, it is held responsible for the infringement. On the other hand, in relation to the constitution of an autonomous, rational and responsible self, we have an exclusion of the other, including a locus of desires, feelings, and wishes, which does not fit within its confines. This modern rational self, as Connolly argues, is only an historical product. It should not be understood in a transcendental sense as the natural or true self. As there is not a natural or true self predesigned to fit neatly into the mould, the production of the modern rational self requires an exclusion of the other, that is, an exclusion of the selves which do not fit into the mode. In Connolly's words,

the human is the incomplete animal, completed only within the frame of social form. But since humans were not designed to fit neatly into any social form, and since no ideal form has been predesigned to mesh with every desire and stirring within the self, every particular form of completion subjugates even while it realizes something in us, does violence to selves even while enabling them to be. (Connolly, 1987:13)

In an article titled "Foucault's challenge to critical theory", White (1986) also sees Foucault's contribution in terms of his reminding us of what has been excluded, devalued, marginalized and unlearned in modern life. Specifically, in relation to the process of the formation of modern subjectivity, White says, there are some aspects of subjectivity that have been systematically excluded and devalued in the modern world. "Foucault allows us to glimpse in an arresting manner the degree to which subjectivity in modernity closes off access to the subject's own pre-rational, embodied otherness". This otherness can be referred to "the body and aesthetic-expressive capabilities" that are devalued and marginalized in the process of "our modern fixation on cognitive and juridical subjectivity" (White, 1986:424).

White considers that Foucault's challenge to Habermas's theory consists in questions of whether the conceptual framework of Habermas's theory is blind to a negative power, a power which negates and excludes the pre-rational, aesthetic self. White says,

critical theory must continually hold itself open to the possibility that its own concepts make it blind to some dimensions of power. ... If Foucault is right about the exclusion and devaluation of the body and the aesthetic-expressive capacities, then critical theory is obliged to press this question upon itself. (White, 1986:424)

While White's discussion, as I shall examine later, has its own problems, nevertheless, I agree with him that critical theory is obliged to press upon itself the question of "an exclusion of the other". I contend that Habermas's project, indeed, tends to subjugate, negate and exclude the other. To establish this, however, requires a close analysis of Habermas's discussion of the rational subject.

In portraying a rational subject as one who is able and willing to provide grounds for assertions, Habermas has privileged the cognitive and juridical self at the expense of "the other", of the pre-rational self, or the self which does not fit into the mould. In Habermas's work, those who can provide grounds for their assertions are seen as rational; those who fail to demonstrate such competence are condemned as irrational.

Rationality is understood to be a disposition of speaking and acting subjects that is expressed in modes of behavior for which there are good reasons or grounds. (Habermas, 1991:22)

Anyone who is so privatistic in his attitudes and evaluations that they cannot be explained and rendered plausible by appeal to standards of evaluation is not behaving rationally. (Habermas, 1991:17)

In the examples given by Habermas, we could see that those who fail to justify their preferences or feelings according to the culturally established norms are regarded as irrational, as deviant, as the other. For instance, there is somebody who wants a saucer of mud. Habermas

states, this person is rational when the want can be justified according to certain culturally established standards, such as for the enjoyment of its rich river-smell. Those who fail to justify their expressions according to the established norms are defined as *deviant*. In the examples of a special liking for the smell of rotten apples and a horrified reaction to open spaces, Habermas says, those who explain their libidinous reaction to rotten apples by referring to the "infatuating", "unfathomable", "vertiginous" smell, or who explain their panicked reaction to open spaces by their "crippling", "leadens", "sucking" emptiness fail to meet with understanding in the everyday contexts of most cultures. Their failure to justify the evaluations according to the culturally established norms renders the experiences deviant (Habermas, 1991:17).

While these examples are mainly concerned with institutionally *bound* speech-acts, Habermas is in fact more interested in institutionally *unbound* speech-acts of which the illocutionary force cannot be traced back to the binding force of the normative context. He sees that a rational person should be able to adopt a reflective attitude toward one's own cultural standards.

We call a person rational who interprets the nature of his desires and feelings [Bedurfnisnatur] in the light of culturally established standards of value, but especially if he can adopt a reflective attitude to the very value standards through which desires and feelings are interpreted. (Habermas, 1991:20)

Habermas asserts that, when challenged in institutionally unbound speech-acts, individuals have to justify their assertion by producing cogent arguments that are convincing in virtue of their intrinsic properties. The arguments cannot draw their force directly from the social force of norms or traditional values. They must provide arguments as if they are going to convince a universal audience.

According to Habermas's theory, those who lack the intention to justify their feelings and attitudes, say, they might want to remain privatistic in their attitudes and preferences, are regarded as deviant. Moreover, those who lack the ability to engage in argumentation are



regarded as irrational. What Habermas fails to recognize is the fact that the intention and ability to engage in argumentation are very often connected with masculinity in modern societies.

In a critique of Habermas's work, Fraser (1985:108) points out that the capacities for speech "are connected with masculinity in male-dominated, classical capitalism. They are capacities which are in myriad ways denied to women and deemed at odds with femininity". She cites the studies about the effects of male dominance and female subordination in everyday communication between husbands and wives, and says: "The research shows that men tend to control conversations, determining what topics are pursued, while women do more 'interaction work' like asking questions and providing verbal support". From the research findings mentioned by Fraser, we can speculate that, compared with women, men tend to be more enthusiastic about argumentation and have argumentative ability. While women ask questions, men are the ones who answer, who make assertions and justify assertions. From this perspective, men's enthusiasm and capabilities for speech and argumentation should be seen as part of the problem of male dominance in our society. Failing to thematize the masculine subtext underlying the model of rational subjectivity, Habermas's theory may only lend strength to the devaluation of women and femininity in a male-dominated society.

Some feminists argue for a reconceptualization of social and political theory based on women's experiences. They do not only affirm women's experience and femininity, but also propose mothering and nurturance as the basis of new models for the moral-political community. For instance, in articulating an ethic of care, Gilligan (1988:xix,xx) argues for a positive recognition and revaluation of traditional feminine virtues of nurturance and compassion. She suggests that there is a different voice--a voice of care and connection--to that of the dominant moral discourse. This voice represents neither a deficiency nor an anomaly, but rather an ethic of care: a distinctively feminine moral ground for decision-making and problem-solving, action and choice.

Miller (1976:38-9), on the other hand, argues that a devaluation of emotions is a serious cultural error. She points out that most women do have a greater sense of the emotional components of human activity than most men, partly as a result of their subordinated position in which they must learn to be attuned to the vicissitudes of pleasure and displeasure of the dominant group. Nevertheless, this characteristic of women should be treated as strengths or capacities; specifically, it represents the capacities to experience, express, and interpret emotions, to cultivate cooperativeness, and to facilitate working and living together. Furthermore, these capacities or characteristics of women "represent potentials that can provide a new framework, one which would have to be inevitably different from that of the dominant male society" (Miller, 1976:27). They could become the building blocks of a new and more humane culture.

A more detailed discussion of their views is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, what should be emphasized is that from a feminist perspective, Habermas's work should be questioned in terms of its devaluation of women's experiences and abilities and an exclusion of them as the other. By defining rational subjectivity in terms of the abilities of speech and argumentation, Habermas's theory in effect excludes femininity and women as "the other". Measured against Habermas's standard of rational subjectivity, women are likely to be rejected as irrational.

In short, Habermas's discussion of rational subjectivity implies an exclusion of "the other" -- the deviant, the irrational. In institutionally unbound speech-acts, those who fail to have argumentative abilities are considered as irrational; in institutionally bound speech-acts, those who remain privatistic in their attitudes and feelings are considered as deviant.

As White notices, "the other" can be referred to the pre-rational, aesthetic self which fails to conform to Habermas's model. One should conclude that Habermas's theory is to be criticized because of its exclusion of the other. Yet, to my surprise, White does not come to the same conclusion.

White argues that though Habermas's project emphasizes the juridical and cognitive aspects of the subject, it does not completely neglect the aesthetic aspect; on the contrary, it provides us with the conceptual resources to link the juridical and cognitive aspects with the aesthetic subjectivity. Habermas's theory of universal pragmatics, White notes, shows that there are three general pragmatic functions of language, that is, the cognitive, interactive and aesthetic-expressive functions, each of which can provide the basis for understanding one of the aspects of subjectivity. Habermas's theory, he asserts, provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding different aspects of subjectivity: the cognitive, the juridical, and the aesthetic-expressive aspects (White, 1986:425). White concludes that Foucault's work does not successfully challenge Habermas's theory; Habermas's theory does not contain the kind of negative power that negates and excludes the aesthetic self.

I would like to point out that White's conclusion is mistaken as it has confused Habermas's notion of aesthetic self with Foucault's notion of otherness. While Habermas does talk about the aesthetic self, it is not the kind of "pre-rational, embodied otherness" disclosed by Foucault's work. The aesthetic self that appears in Habermas's theory is treated as part of the modern structure of consciousness. It is to be analyzed as one of the spheres of validity. According to Habermas, the aesthetic-expressive aspect of subjectivity can be analyzed in terms of whether individuals' expression is truthful or not. When individuals reveal their subjective experience, they are laying a claim to authenticity and truthfulness. What is revealed can be challenged as whether it is a sincere and truthful expression. For Habermas, rational subjects should be ready and able to prove trustworthy, either by giving assurances to dispel doubts or by allowing others to check the consistency of their subsequent behavior.

... We even call someone rational if he makes known a desire or an intention, expresses a feeling or mood, shares a secret, confesses a deed, etc., and is then able to reassure critics in regard to the revealed experience by drawing practical consequences from it and behaving consistently thereafter. (Habermas, 1981:15)



In Habermas's view, though the redemption of the claim of truthfulness cannot be done on the basis of the mere force of argument, as in the case of truth and normative claims, one still needs to prove trustworthy by other means. The expression of our subjective feelings is to be open for objective appraisal. *Proof* is always required. While Habermas's theory affirms the existence of inner worlds, of subjective feelings and experiences, they have to be governed by the standard of rational subjectivity. Those who fail to *prove* trustworthy are rejected as irrational. In this sense, Habermas's discussion of the aesthetic self does not, as White believes, accommodate otherness; on the contrary, it excludes "the other" as irrational.

The problems of White's discussion consist both in its confusing Habermas's notion of aesthetic self with Foucault's notion of otherness, and in its preoccupation with a juridico-discursive mode of analysis. A juridico-discursive mode of analysis not only represents power as one which negates, represses and excludes, but also seeks to submit power to the rule of right. It seeks to have a principle with which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. As White is preoccupied with how to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate power, he comes to the question of how to distinguish legitimate forms of otherness from illegitimate forms.

White argues that, while we should be more open to otherness, 'otherness' is not just something to be fostered, but also constrained. He says that no theorists would give blanket endorsement to the explosions of violence associate with, say resurgence of ethnic group nationalism in the Soviet Union or with the growth of street gangs in Los Angeles. It is necessary to engage in political reflection about the possible guidelines to distinguish different forms of otherness and to condemn some of them (White, 1991:133).

White's focus on the question of differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate otherness leads him back to Habermas's communicative ethics, on the basis of which he suggests a notion of intersubjective otherness. He argues in line with Habermas that there is an obligation, implicit in linguistic interaction, to justify the norms one proposes. A just outcome can emerge only if the norms proposed are agreed on by

all those affected by the norms. In light of this, whether certain forms of otherness are to be fostered or constrained has to be tested in Habermas's model of argumentation. He asserts that only those which command consensus and intersubjectivity are to be regarded as legitimate (White, 1986:428; 1991:138-9). For White, the problem of Foucault's work lies in its inability to provide any criteria to distinguish different forms of otherness and resistance. He says that Foucault "provides us, ultimately, with no way of distinguishing the resistance of women's movement or the Polish Solidarity movement from, say, the Ku Klux Klan or Jim Jones's People's Temple" (White, 1986:430).

As Foucault's work is used by White in a juridico-discursive mode of analysis, its shortcomings seem to outweigh its insights. Though White regards the notion of otherness as Foucault's major contribution, he sees it as flawed from the beginning because it lacks a clear formulation that enables us to distinguish legitimate and illegitimate forms of otherness. Preoccupied with questions of legitimacy, White contends that Foucault's notion of otherness is not so much a useful basis in dealing the questions.

To close my discussion of the thesis of "an exclusion of the other", several points must be noted. First of all, Foucault's analysis of the relationship between subject and subjugation reminds us whether our model of the subject implies an exclusion of the other. Accordingly, Habermas's model of rational subjectivity can be questioned in terms of its exclusion of women's experiences and abilities, as well as <sup>of</sup> the pre-rational, aesthetic self as the other. One should, however, notice that this way of drawing insights emphasizes the negative aspect of power. In this way it overlooks Foucault's further insights of a productive concept of power. Moreover, as it represents power in a negative way, one may, as White does, seek to submit power to the rule of right and search for a principle of legitimacy which Foucault refuses to provide. I suggest that in order to fully appreciate the nature and extent of Foucault's insights, one needs to read his work from the perspective of a strategic model.

### *Foucault's challenge: production of subjects*

When power is analyzed from the perspective of a strategic model, what concerns us is "the totality of the means put into operation to implement power effectively or to maintain it". Instead of asking "what legitimates power", one asks "how power is exercised"; "by what means power effects are maintained". In order to implement power effectively, Foucault argues, power cannot merely prohibit, negate and repress; power must be productive: power produces knowledge; power produces subjects. In Chapter 4 we have seen how power joins hands with knowledge; this chapter discusses how power operates through a production of subjectivity. We do not only have an alliance of knowledge-power, but a knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance in modern societies.

Habermas's theory, which is preoccupied with the differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate power, overlooks the way in which power operates. For Habermas, legitimate power is to do with rational subjects engaging in free and undistorted discussion, whereas illegitimate power is to do with distorted communication and a *negation* of this modern rational subjectivity. The way he represents power, I argue, has two problems. Firstly, it represents power as negative. Foucault's work, in contrast, shows that power can be positive. Power does not necessarily operate through a negation of subjectivity; on the contrary, the operation of power may well involve a fostering rather than a suppressing of individuality, a production rather than a repression of subjectivity. Foucault's analysis, which shifts our attention to the concrete operation of power, can be used to show the inadequacy of Habermas's theory in capturing the productive aspects of power. Secondly, Habermas privileges a certain modern, rational subjectivity as the basis of critique, as our comfort. Foucault, in contrast, argues that power does not operate through a negation of a modern, rational subjectivity; on the contrary, it is through the modern, rational, autonomous, self-reflective subjectivity that modern forms of power operate. In this way, the comfort that Habermas's project provides in modern rational, reflective subjectivity is exposed



as being misguided. In this section, I shall elaborate these insights of Foucault's strategic model.

Foucault's analysis of disciplinary-normalizing power, I suggest, should not be read merely in terms of what it excludes and subjugates, but rather in terms of the subjectivity and individuality that it produces and fosters. This is where the novelty of Foucault's work lies. It demonstrates that individuals can be subjected to the power of normalization while at the same time experiencing individuality and subjectivity.

In disciplinary processes, individuals are subject to procedures, norms, and controls, that is, the force of normalization. Nevertheless, Foucault argues, normalization is not exactly a force of expiation or even repression, but rather a power of individualization. It recognizes rather than negates individuality; it promotes rather than suppresses individuality. Normalization, Foucault elaborates, brings five quite distinct operations into play. In addition to homogenization and exclusion, the operations of normalization include comparison, differentiation, and hierarchization.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, while a norm is set up as the rule, and those who fail to conform are condemned as the "bad" or the "shameful" class, nevertheless, the norm also functions as a standard for comparison, classification, hierarchization, and distribution of rank.<sup>10</sup> The norm serves a power of individualization: it

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<sup>9</sup> Foucault writes, "the art of punishing, in the regime of disciplinary power, is aimed neither at expiation, nor even precisely at repression. It brings five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals. It introduces, through this 'value-giving' measure, the constraints of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal (the 'shameful' class of the *Ecole Militaire*). The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes" (Foucault, 1979a:182-3).

<sup>10</sup> Foucault gives the example of the military school *Ecole Militaire* in which "a complex system of 'honorary' classification was developed; this classification was made visible to all in the form of slight variations in uniform and more or less noble or ignoble punishments were associated as a mark of privilege or infamy, with the ranks thus distributed ... The first class, known as the 'very good', were distinguished by a

"individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render differences useful by fitting them one to another" (Foucault, 1979a:184).

In contrast to the juridico-discursive mode of analysis which assumes that power simply negates, Foucault shows that the power of normalization does not merely operate according to the simple procedure of a division and rejection. It works in a more complicated way. It does not only reject and exclude but also compares and hierarchizes. It does not only impose homogeneity; it is also a power of individualization.

Similarly, what is involved in the production of subjects of sexuality is not exactly a force of repression or expiation, but rather a power of individualization. While the heterosexual couple is seen as the norm or the legitimate couple and those who fail to conform are seen as abnormal or perverts, the procedure through which power operates is more than a simple division and rejection. One should not emphasize exclusion at the expense of other operations. Instead one should notice that individuals are compared, differentiated, and hierarchized according to their differing nature and qualities. Some kinds of sexuality are seen as more acceptable than others; some kinds of pursued pleasure are seen as more normal than others. Individuals come to recognize themselves as a subject with a certain nature and quality. They are marked by their own individuality. They are turned into a subject on the basis of a norm which functions as a technique of individualization.

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silver epaulette; they enjoyed the honor of being treated as 'purely military troops'; they therefore had a right to military punishment, (arrests and, in serious cases, imprisonment). The second class, the 'good', wore an epaulette of red silk and silver; they could be arrested and condemned to prison, but also to the cage and to kneeling. The class of '*mediocres*' had the right to an epaulette of red wool; to the preceding penalties was added, if necessary, the wearing of sackcloth. The last class, that of the 'bad', was marked by an epaulette of brown wool; 'the pupils of this class will be subjected to all the punishments used in the Hotel, or all those that are thought necessary, even solitary confinement in a dark dungeon'. To this was added, for a time, the 'shameful' class, for which special regulations were drawn up 'so that those who belonged to it would be separated from the others and would be dressed in sackcloth'" (Foucault, 1979a:181-2).



Besides showing that the power of normalization works is *more* complicated than simply a division and rejection, Foucault's strategic model helps us to focus on the totality of means by which power operates. In Chapter 4, we have seen that knowledge provides the internal condition for the exercise of power. In this chapter, we see that power operates not only through a production of knowledge but also through a production of subjects. We do not only have an alliance between power and knowledge, but a modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance. In light of Foucault's strategic model, we should focus on how power operates according to the matrix of knowledge-power-subjectivity.

In the beginning of Part II, I discussed how the functioning of the penitentiary apparatus of the prison requires the production of a new class of subjects--the delinquent. What should be noticed is that in relation to the production of the delinquent, a whole web of analyses and knowledges was built up. This defines and analyzes the ways in which the delinquent is different from the criminal. Knowledges of criminology are developed in relation to this new class of subjects. The task of criminology is not only to define the act scientifically qua offence, but to define the individual qua delinquent. The delinquent is fabricated as the point of application of power, and as the object of a form of knowledge that Foucault calls "penitentiary science". From the fabrication of the delinquent is witnessed a knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance.

In the area of sexual perversity, one can trace the exercise of power according to the knowledge-power-subjectivity matrix. According to Foucault, the "new persecution of the peripheral sexualities entailed an incorporation of perversions and a new specification of individuals". The advance of the knowledge of psychiatry enables the production of a whole range of perverse subjects that awaits correction and therapeutic intervention. Psychiatry initially "set out to discover the etiology of mental illnesses, focusing its gaze first on 'excess', then onanism, then frustration, then 'frauds against procreation'", but gradually it annexed the whole of the sexual perversions as its own province (Foucault, 1979b:30). With the psychiatrization of sexual perversions, there were



more and more categories created: "Krafft-Ebing's zoophiles and zooerasts, Rohleder's auto-monosexualists, and later mixoscopophiles, gynecomasts, prebyophiles, sexoesthetic inverts and dyspareunist women" (Foucault, 1979b:42-3). All these names referred to a nature. There was an incorporation of perversions, and a specification of the individuals according to these categories of sexual perversions. They provide surface for power intervention. The function of power operates not by an exclusion of these sexualities, but a solidification of each of them. Each of these categories is fabricated as an object of knowledge and as a target for power intervention.

The most ironic thing is: the operation of power depends upon not only the production of perverse subjects, but the production of free, rational, and self-reflective subjects. Foucault (1979b) shows that in sexual liberation individuals are constituted as free, rational, and self-reflective subjects; nevertheless, at the same time this enables them to be more deeply entangled in the network of power.

The appearance of sexual liberation is related to people's thinking that they were too sexually repressed and needed above all liberation. In seeking liberation, they presuppose that there is a certain nature inside themselves to be liberated. They want to be free from all the rules, customs and prohibitions and enjoy their sexual nature. They want to throw away the taboos and talk about the things deep inside them. There is an incitement to talk about sex. A whole web of discourses, knowledges and analyses are produced to talk about the nature of sex, and to inform individuals what particular kind of sexual nature they have. In this way, on the one hand, there is an experience of freedom and autonomous subjectivity, on the other hand, individuals are subjected to new forms of practice of power-knowledge.

In searching for their sexual nature, individuals require both the help of experts, be they psychologists, psychoanalysts or social workers, and the attention and care from the priest. To these experts and spiritual masters, individuals confess their thoughts and desires; they confess their sins. They go about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell. In order to obtain the truth about sexual nature, confession is established as the major ritual through which

they can obtain the truth. "Western man has become a confessing animal". The ritual of confession is, nevertheless, unfolded within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile (Foucault, 1979b:61-2). Hence while through the ritual of confession, individuals are enlightened about the truth inside themselves, and are purified and have their burdens of wrongs taken away, yet at the same time individuals subject themselves to new relations of power. Confession liberates; nevertheless, at the same time it subjects individuals to new forms of power.

In the example of sexual liberation, Foucault demonstrates the positive aspects of power that Habermas's theory fails to capture. He shows that power operates not by making sex a taboo, but rather through an incitement to talk about sex. Power no longer controls by repression, but by producing truths, by producing images of how to realize one's true sexual nature, of how to become a full, healthy, fulfilled sexual being. Foucault argues that in throwing away the previous sexual prohibitions, people subject themselves to new forms of power and new relations of domination. Power no longer merely controls by prohibition, but by techniques of examination and self-examination, practices of psychoanalysis and confession. In going for liberation, people feel that they are free from power, nevertheless they do not realize that they are at the same time entangled more deeply in networks of power to be escaped.

Foucault's strategic model does not only draw our attention to the positive aspects of power, but also raises questions about a major assumption of Habermas's critical theory. Habermas's theory assumes that power has to do with distorted communication in which the modern, rational, autonomous, reflective subjectivity is negated. Foucault shows that modern forms of power actually operate with a constitution of this subjectivity. In the example of sexual liberation, it is demonstrated that power operates through an incitement to talk about and reflect upon the sexual nature. Individuals are constituted as



autonomous and rational subjects who freely discuss sex; they are constituted as self-reflective subjects who seek a self-decipherment of their true nature. While power is put into operation, individuals are not deprived of a free and rational subjectivity; while they are subjected to the confessional technology of power, individuals are not deprived of an autonomous, self-reflective subjectivity. Instead they are experiencing a rational, autonomous, and self-reflective subjectivity when power is put into operation.

In this sense, one could no longer rely upon a notion of rational, autonomous, self-reflective subjectivity to provide us the basis of hope. Foucault's work exposes this misguided comfort in Habermas's theory. Habermas's notion of communicative action, which is considered as the basis of critique, relies upon an a priori theory of an autonomous, rational subject engaging in free, undistorted, reflective discussion. He does not realize that modern forms of power can operate with a constitution rather than a negation of rational and autonomous (inter)subjectivity. The operation of modern power actually relies upon a constitution of individuals as rational subjects who discuss sex freely, and a constitution of individuals as autonomous and self-reflective subjects who ponder their true nature. If modern forms of power can operate through the production of free, rational and self-reflective subjects, we can no longer lay our faith in Habermas's notion of rational, autonomous, reflective (inter)subjectivity. We should instead examine the involvement of this subjectivity in the deployment of modern power.

Habermas's project therefore has to press upon itself not only the question of an exclusion of the other, but also the questions of whether it produces a modern rational subjectivity and whether this subjectivity is involved in the deployment of modern power. One may question whether the notion of a self-reflective subject, which has been governing the thought of the Frankfurt School and Habermas, forms part of the condition for the development of modern forms of power. Reflexivity, as Connolly (1987) elaborates, seeks to make all impulses that govern the self as well as all forces that govern the order transparent to the subject. Nevertheless, he argues, reflexivity is shown



to be a trap, for it draws us into confessional relationships and brings us more thoroughly within the orbit of normalization.

Reflexivity is a trap. It obliges us to bring the self more completely under the control of historically constructed standards of reason and morality; it draws us into confessional relationships in which therapeutic authorities first translate our dreams, wishes, and anxieties into clinical vocabularies and then hand them back to us as officially prescribed avenues to freedom; and it sets the stage for political authorities to impose virtue on those who have not internalized the officially sanctioned standards of self-consciousness. (Connolly, 1987:108)

Habermas has been trying to move away from the notion of self-consciousness and reflexivity, and instead talks about intersubjectivity. His theory, nevertheless, still presupposes an a priori notion of a responsible and rational subject who possesses certain attributes and capabilities. Responsible subjects, for him, are those who can orient their actions to intersubjectively recognized validity claims. In addition, throughout his work, human beings are considered as rational speaking and acting subjects when they are willing and able to provide grounds for their assertions, claims and expressed feelings. One may question whether the production of these notions of subjects provides the condition of existence for modern forms of power. For instance, one may ask: whether it is part of a body of discourses which are integrated with diverse institutions in the constitution of responsible and obedient citizens, and whether it sets the stage for political authorities to impose punishment on those "irresponsible" subjects who fail to orient their action to intersubjectively recognized validity claims. Or one may ask: whether it leads to an incitement not only to talk about feelings but to justify them, and whether it invites therapeutic intervention for those who fail to justify their feelings according to the standard of a rational speaking and acting subject. In short, one may question whether Habermas's notions of responsible and rational subjects bring us more thoroughly within the orbit of normalization.

In Foucault's work, we see that there is a modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance. Bodies of knowledges, for instance, psychiatry, are integrated into the functioning of the power of normalization and produce power effects in the constitution of subjectivities. In these knowledges the specification of a norm is inseparable from the specification of means of effecting normativity and correcting deviance. For instance, psychiatry, in defining what is our sexual nature, at the same time, specifies how we can fulfil or realize our nature as well as correct the attitudes or acts that violate this nature. Psychiatry is integrated with institutional practice which corrects deviance and constitutes individuals as normal, fulfilled sexual beings. Habermas's theory, of course, has a different nature from psychiatry. One cannot simply conclude that Habermas's theory would function in the same way as psychiatry, for while it specifies a norm of the rational subject, it is far from a specification which corrects deviance and effects normativity. Nevertheless, discourses of the rational subject may take form in knowledges of ethics and pedagogy which are integrated with the functioning of the power of normalization. Hence Habermas's theory has to be reminded of the danger of incorporation into a modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance.

In suggesting this about Habermas's theory, I do not intend to reject the theory on a normative ground. My reading of Foucault's work here is based on a strategic model rather than a normative model. A strategic model is concerned with the means by which the effects of power are maintained, whereas a normative model focuses on the differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate power, acceptable and unacceptable power. Reading Foucault from a normative model may lead one to reject Habermas's work on a normative ground. Fraser (1985:177-81), for instance, provides a reading of Foucault from a normative model. She is interested in whether Habermas's theory is normatively acceptable or unacceptable, and Foucault's work is read as providing an answer to this normative question.

Fraser argues that Foucault's work can be read as a rejection of humanism on normative grounds, and Habermas's conceptualization

of autonomy is one of its targets. In her view, "Foucault is claiming that even a perfectly realized autonomous subjectivity would be a form of normalizing, disciplinary domination", that even if Habermas's ideal speech situation was realized, this would not be freedom. For these humanist ideals are the very goals of disciplinary power: a fully panoptimized society in which the disciplinary norms are so thoroughly internalized that they would not be experienced from without and that individuals would be autonomous. Fraser understands Foucault's challenge as this: "even Habermas's version of humanist ideals is internal to the disciplinary regime and devoid of critical, emancipatory force with respect to it. Thus such ideals should be rejected on normative grounds" (Fraser, 1985:180).

While Foucault's work exposes our misguided comfort in ideals of rational, autonomous subjectivity and shows that they can be an internal condition for the exercise of power, nevertheless, I contend, it is not intended to serve as a normative ground on which we should reject these ideals. What Foucault shows is the danger of these ideals. To say that they are dangerous is, however, not exactly the same as saying they are bad.<sup>11</sup> There should not be a simple rejection of these ideals on a normative ground, but rather a scrutiny of them in terms of their role in the deployment of modern power.

Reading Foucault from a normative model tends to see Foucault's weakness outweigh its strengths. Just as White does, Fraser seems to see some of Foucault's insights, but gets caught up with the normative question, she criticizes Foucault in terms of a failure to provide a normative ground of critique. Fraser (1985:180) criticizes that a normative rejection of humanism requires appeal to some alternative, posthumanist, ethical paradigm capable of identifying objectionable features of a fully realized autonomous society. Foucault's failure to provide such a normative basis leads Fraser to conclude that Foucault has not given us good reasons to reject humanism on normative grounds.

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11 Foucault says: "My point is not that everything is bad, but rather everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad" (Foucault, 1986a:343).



Fraser does not realize that it is indeed not Foucault's intention to give good normative reasons for us to reject humanism or Habermas's theory. Foucault wants to show us the modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance and the danger of being incorporated into this alliance. From the perspective of a strategic model, Habermas's theory is not to be rejected as a negative power, but rather reminded of the danger of being integrated into the functions of modern power.

The questions left are: how can we avoid such a danger? what could we do about the modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance?

In Chapter 4, I have discussed Foucault's calling for the insurrection of subjugated knowledges. He gives endorsement to their struggles against the domination of scientific knowledges; yet he does not seek to provide any theory to support them or to unite them according to a notion of truth. For Foucault, this would be in danger of constructing with our own hands the kind of systematic, unitary discourses of truth that we struggle against.

In relation to the problem of subjectivity, Foucault is happy to see the struggles against the submission of subjectivity, that is "against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way (struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission)". He contends that these struggles represent "a refusal of a scientific or administrative inquisition which determines who one is" (Foucault, 1982:212-3). Nevertheless, in his latest studies of the Greek aesthetics of existence, he seems to articulate a certain notion of the aesthetic subject. Does he, as his critics understand it, try to provide a ground of critique or a ground for resistance?

In Part III, I shall discuss Foucault's idea of an aesthetics of existence and show how it helps us reflect upon resistance against the modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance. I shall also take issue with criticisms of the inadequacies of Foucault's idea as a normative basis.

### 5.3 An Aesthetics of Existence

There are some critics who view Foucault's idea of an aesthetics of existence as an attempt to provide a normative ground of critique. White (1986), for instance, contends that Foucault was notoriously reluctant to engage in extensive speculation about a new kind of subjectivity, but in some of his last work the outlines of an aesthetic do appear. White argues that Foucault's notion of an aesthetic subject is nevertheless flawed for its inadequacy in providing a basis for the endorsement of new social movements. He contends that what Foucault needs is a notion of juridical subjectivity that one can find in Habermas's work. Wolin (1986), in a critique of Foucault, views Foucault's aestheticism as an exclusive primacy of an artistic approach to life, in opposition to science and morality. He criticizes this approach as being extremely one-sided and inadequate, since it provides no trace of human solidarity or mutuality, and is insensible to other human values.

I suggest that Foucault's idea of the Greek aesthetics of existence should not be read as a normative ground that Foucault provides for critique. Nor should it be seen as an attempt to set up an a priori theory of the subject for the endorsement of resistance.<sup>12</sup> As one can see what he does to the subjugated knowledges, he stands by the side of these knowledges but he never provides any theory to support them or to unite them according to a notion of truth. Similarly, he is not ready to provide a theory of the subject to become the center of a new philosophy. For Foucault, this would be in danger of constructing with our own hands the kind of systematic, unitary discourses of truth and subject that we struggle against.

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<sup>12</sup> I acknowledge that there may be some confusion with Foucault's position toward the Greek ethics. For instance, in an interview, he seems to treat it as a basis, a principle that assures us from the danger of domination. He says, "if you care for yourself correctly i.e. if you know ontologically what you are ... you cannot abuse your power over others. There is therefore no danger" (Foucault, 1988a:8). This is, however, not the stance he takes in his studies of the ancient ethics. See Foucault, 1987; 1990.

Therefore, although in his last works Foucault seems to pay a lot of attention to the Greek aesthetics of existence and their practice of care for self, nevertheless, in contrast to his critics' understanding, he does not intend to treat it as a basis, a principle to be rediscovered or as a key to everything. In an interview, Foucault agrees that we may try to actualize the notion of care for self in the struggle against modern forms of power; nevertheless, he says:

I am not doing that in order to say: "Unfortunately we have forgotten the care for self. Here is the care for self. It is the key to everything". Nothing is more foreign to me than the idea that philosophy strayed at a certain moment of time, and that it has forgotten something and that somewhere in her history there exists a principle, a basis that must be rediscovered ... This does not mean that contact with such and such a philosopher cannot produce something but we would have to understand that this thing is new. (Foucault, 1988a:14-5)

Perhaps we may expect that our contact with notions of care for self and aesthetics of existence could produce something, and this 'something', I suggest, is a glimpse of the possibility of a form of becoming a subject which is not tied to the modern forms of power.

In Volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault shows how power makes individuals subjects. In Volume 2 and 3, the focus of his study shifts to individuals themselves, and examines how individuals turn themselves into subjects through practices of self. As the study focuses on the way in which subjects constitute themselves in an active fashion, one may question whether this contradicts his earlier study which portrays individuals as passive subjects, and whether this shift implies an attempt to set up an a priori theory of subject which ignores the problem of power.

It cannot be denied that there is a theoretical shift in Foucault's work;<sup>13</sup> nevertheless, this does not mean that it returns to an a priori theory of the subject as an autonomous, rational agent who stands

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<sup>13</sup> In an interview, Foucault explains the shifts of focus in the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality*; see Foucault, 1986b.



outside power and resists power. For there is no absence of power in the process of self-constitution, and the practices through which subjects constitutes themselves are linked to subjection. These practices, as Foucault says, are not something that individuals invent by themselves, but rather patterns that they find in their culture, which are proposed, suggested and *imposed* on them by their society and social group (Foucault, 1988a:11). In other words, the problem of subjection still exists in the self-constitution. Nevertheless, in analyzing different modes of subjection, I contend, Foucault shows us an alternative way of self-constitution to the one associated with modern forms of power.

In the constitution of oneself as an ethical subject, one has to be subjected according to rules of conduct. Nevertheless, there can be different modes of subjection, and Foucault would like to draw our attention to the mode of subjection associated with the Greek aesthetics of existence. He writes, there are different modes of subjection, that is, different ways in which individuals establish their relation to the rule and thereby feel obliged to follow the rule. For example, with regard to the rule of conjugal fidelity, individuals can comply with it because of customary reasons; that is, they acknowledge themselves as a member of the group that accepts it, and hence silently preserves it as a custom. Individuals can practise it for religious reasons, that is, they regard themselves as belonging to a spiritual tradition, and hence follows the rule according to the sacred text or divine law. On the other hand, one can practise fidelity because of an aesthetic of existence, that is, one's "seeking to give one's personal life a form that answers to criteria of brilliance, beauty, nobility, or perfection". (Foucault, 1987:27)

An "aesthetics of existence", Foucault elaborates:

those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria. (Foucault, 1987:10-11)

The theme of an aesthetics of existence can be found in Baudelaire's idea of "dandyism". The dandy is the individual who makes his body, his behavior, his feelings and passions, his very existence a work of art. There is a determination to live a beautiful life and to leave others memories of a beautiful existence (Foucault, 1986f:41-2). As an aesthetic of existence seeks to fulfil certain aesthetic values and stylistic criteria, its mode of self-constitution is very different from that of a juridical form of morality which lends support to modern forms of power.

According to Foucault, one of the examples of a juridical form of morality is Christian morality.<sup>14</sup> What is emphasized is a codification of behavior, a strict definition of what is permitted and what is forbidden; what is valued is the systematicity of codes, its richness, its capacity to embrace every possible case and every area of behavior; what is important is the authority that enforces the code, that requires it to be learned and observed, that penalizes violations of the code. With a juridical form of morality, one constitutes oneself as an ethical subject by observing universal laws, in the respect of an authority and in the fear of punishment. "[T]he ethical subject refers his conduct to a law, or sets of laws, to which he must submit at the risk of committing offences that may make him liable to punishment" (Foucault, 1987:29-30).

In contrast to the Christian juridical form of morality, Foucault writes, the Greek morality aims at an aesthetics of existence in which the system of codes and rules of behavior are rather rudimentary. When constituting oneself as an subject, the exact observance of the code is relatively unimportant. The emphasis is rather placed on the relationship one has with oneself, on the practices that enable one to transform one's mode of being (Foucault, 1987:30). Compared to the juridical form of morality,

the individual did not make himself into an ethical subject by universalizing the principles that informed his action; on the contrary, he did so by means of an attitude and a quest that individualized his action, modulated it, and perhaps even gave him a special

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<sup>14</sup> In particular, Foucault (1987:30) is referring to the Christian morality since the development of the penitential system in the thirteen century up to the eve of the Reformation.

brilliance by virtue of the rational and deliberate structure his action manifested. (Foucault, 1987:62)

The Greek morality, in Foucault's view, is unlike the Christian morality which might lend support to modern forms of power. A comparison of the Greek and Christian morality of sexual behavior helps illustrate why this is so. Their difference, according to Foucault, lies firstly in the ethical substance and secondly in the form of subjection. In terms of ethical substance, the Greek sexual ethic focuses on the *aphrodisia*, that is, "acts, gestures, and contacts that produce a certain form of pleasure" (Foucault, 1987:40). Similar to the pleasures of food and drink, sexual pleasure is liable to the danger of self-indulgence. Hence for the Greeks, the concern was whether it is excessive. Moderation was emphasized in teachings: only when one constituted oneself as a moderate subject and exhibited a voluntary self-mastery over one's desires was one considered to be free. Individual freedom was not understood as the independence of a free will, nor was it the will of an all-powerful agency. Freedom was not to be the slave (Foucault, 1987:79). When one seeks an aesthetics of existence and makes a beautiful life one's goal, one exercises perfect dominion over oneself. One supervises one's body and soul, and shapes one's conduct by moderation. No excess or violence is to disturb the beautiful order.<sup>15</sup>

In classical Greek thought, sexual activity was associated with a force that was potentially excessive by nature. The question was how to control and regulate it. Christian morality, in comparison, is also concerned about the excessive force of desires. Nevertheless, in the Christian doctrine of the flesh, the excessive force of desires led to the fall of mankind and marked the internal weakness of human nature. One is hence not just preoccupied with the question of excess but the profound nature of desires, their canonical forms and their secret

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<sup>15</sup> Foucault writes, "We may also recall Xenophon's idealized description of Cyrus' court, which presented a vision of beauty for its own enjoyment, due to the perfect dominion that each individual exercised over himself; the ruler publicly exhibited a mastery and a restraint that spread to everyone, issuing out from them, according to the rank they held, in the form of a moderate conduct, a respect for oneself and for others, a careful supervision of the soul and the body, and a frugal economy of acts, so that no involuntary and violent movement disturbed the beautiful order that seemed to be present in everyone's mind ... " (Foucault, 1987:91).



potential (Foucault, 1987:39-40). In the Christian morality of sexual behavior, the ethical substance is defined by "a domain of desires that lie hidden among the mysteries of the heart" (Foucault, 1987:62). Precautions have to be taken in order to prevent desire from secretly entering the soul and destroying the soul. While the Greek ethic requires one to exercise self-mastery, the Christian morality requires one to detect the secret traces of desires. The relationship that one has with oneself takes the forms of decipherment, confession, self-accusation, struggles against temptation, renunciation, spiritual combat, and so on (Foucault, 1987:63). In contrast to the Greek ethic in which the self-relationship is one of "command-obedience", or "mastery-docility", the Christian morality emphasizes a self-relationship of "decipherment-purification" (Foucault, 1987:70).

As the Christian morality stresses the profound nature of desires and self-decipherment, it represents the form of morality which supports modern forms of power.<sup>16</sup> For the focus on the profound nature and canonical forms of desires makes the question of knowledge and truth central to the formation of the ethical subject. One is to search for the truth of desire and to be guided by the truth. This will to truth lends support to the modern forms of power. Moreover, individuals make themselves into an ethical subject by self-decipherment. Unlike the kind of self-supervision in the Greek ethic which is an exercise of freedom, self-decipherment in the Christian morality requires the advice of pastors or masters. Individuals are questioned, examined, and analyzed. They are subjected to the authority and control of someone else. This is in accord with the development of modern confessional practices in which individuals are subjected to the authority and control of professionals and experts.

In addition to the difference in ethical substance, the Greek and the Christian moralities of sexual behavior differ in their form of subjection. In the Christian morality, subjection is to take the form of a

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<sup>16</sup> See Foucault, 1993, for a contrast of Christianity with other ancient ethics in terms of their practices of self-examination and their subjects' relations to truth. Foucault points out that Seneca, for instance, examines with himself as an administrator. The vocabulary used is administrative rather than judicial.

recognition of the law. The law is imposed on everyone to embrace every area of behavior and every possible act. The law specifies the sets of acts that are allowed and forbidden, their forms and their conditions. The Greeks, on the contrary, "would never say, like a Christian spiritual director, which gestures to make or avoid making, which preliminary caresses were allowed, which position to take, or in which conditions one should interrupt the act" (Foucault, 1987:38-39). Subjection, in the Greek ethic, is to take the form of a *savoir-faire*. That is, while there might be certain general, formal principles that guide behavior, the emphasis is on a *practice* that *adapts* behavior according to time, circumstance and need. There is not any precise code that prescribes everybody's acts.

There were several general principles guiding the use of pleasures in Greek ethics which specified that it was to be practiced according to need, time, and status (Foucault, 1987:54-62). Firstly, the principle of need. While the use of pleasures was regulated by need, it was not to reduce pleasure to nothing; on the contrary, it was to maintain pleasure and to do so through the need that awakened desire. To observe the principle of need enabled one to avoid excess or immoderation. It provided for what was necessary to the body, for what was necessary by nature. Yet unlike Christian morality, need could never take the form of a precise codification or a law applicable to everyone alike in every circumstance.

Secondly, in the use of pleasures, morality was an art of the "right time". This can be referred to a few things: the age of one's life, the right time or season of a year, and the right time of a day. Besides, it referred to the choice of moment for sexual activity, which had to depend on circumstances and other activities. If one served as a good example of moderation, it was not because one had renounced pleasures, but that one knew how to distribute pleasures over the course of existence, and not permitting them to divert one from work. Again there could not be a table or a precise code that prescribed one's choice of moment.

Thirdly, the art of the use of pleasure had to be adapted according to one's status. The Greeks might not reproach people of humble and

insignificant status even when they committed a dishonourable act. On the other hand, for those who attained distinct status, a small mistake would bring disgrace. They were expected to adopt self-mastery and a deliberate rigorous standards of sexual conduct. The more one was in the public eye, the more <sup>of one</sup> was expected <sup>by</sup> people, and the more one had to seek to make one's life into a brilliant work whose reputation would spread and last long.

In short,

here everything was a matter of adjustment, circumstance, and personal position. ... And for this there was no need of anything resembling a text that would have the force of law, but rather, of a *techne* or "practice", a *savoir-faire* that by taking general principles into account would guide action in its time, according to its context, and in view of its ends. (Foucault, 1987:62)

The Greek ethic is not oriented toward a codification of acts, nor toward a hermeneutics of desires, but toward a stylization of attitudes and an aesthetics of existence. It is a stylization because the rules of conduct presented themselves as a sort of open-ended requirement (Foucault, 1987:92). One is to give oneself a style that merits remembrance. For the Greeks, "reflection on sexual behavior as a moral domain was not a means of internalizing, justifying, or formalizing general interdictions imposed on everyone; rather, it was a means of developing ... an aesthetics of existence" (Foucault, 1987:253).

In examining different modes of self-constitution, Foucault provides us with a glimpse of the possibility of a form of becoming the subject which is not in line with that of modern forms of power. Nevertheless, this is not an alternative which stands outside power-knowledge. The Greek ethic is also integrated with practices of power-knowledge. Yet, the type of knowledge it seeks and the relationship between the subject and truth are different from what we have in modern societies.

In disciplinary processes, the exercise of power requires the production of knowledge and truth. Similarly, in antiquity, "one could



not practise moderation without a certain form of knowledge that was at least one of its essential conditions. One could not form oneself as an ethical subject in the use of pleasures without forming oneself at the same time as a subject of knowledge" (Foucault, 1987:86). For example, in practising the Greek ethic of sexual behavior, one needs the knowledge of what is the right age to begin the practice of pleasure; one also needs to know what is the right time of a day to have sexual activity so as to be beneficial to the body. In other words, when one seeks for an aesthetics of existence, knowledge and truth play an indispensable role. The question is: what type of knowledge does it require? As seen in the Greek and Christian sexual moralities, knowledge can be differentiated according to whether it is oriented to a codification of acts that prescribes all our behavior, or whether it is a sort of open-ended requirement that allows adjustments to circumstances and encourages a stylization of behavior.

Of further importance is: in what way do we relate to truth and knowledge? Behind the development of modern forms of power is a will to truth: one is demanded to pursue the truth, to speak the truth, to reflect upon one's true nature. In contrast, when one seeks for an aesthetics of existence, one cares for truth because one cares for self. The care for self is put before the care for truth. To care for self means to master one's appetites, to improve one's self, to surpass one's self. The care for self requires knowledge of certain rules of conduct which are at the same time truths and regulations. To care for self is to fit one's self with these truths (Foucault, 1988a:5). Nevertheless, in what way should we fit ourselves with these truths? In an aesthetics of existence, one cares for truth only because one cares for self. What is established is an instrumental relationship with truth. The truth is pursued for a certain end, for instance, in order to ensure a certain use of pleasures. What one seeks is a practical reason that guides what one ought to do, that helps one adapt behavior according to need, time, and circumstance.

In Greek antiquity, the relation to truth was an instrumental condition "for establishing the individual as a moderate subject leading a life of moderation; it was not an epistemological condition enabling

the individual to recognize himself in his singularity as a desiring subject and to purify himself of the desire that was thus brought to light". While the pursuit of truth was an essential factor in the self-constitution of the subject, nevertheless, "it was not equivalent to an obligation of the subject to speak truthfully concerning himself; it never opened up the soul as a domain of potential knowledge where barely discernible traces of desire needed to be read and interpreted" (Foucault, 1985:89). Hence the pursuit of truth in the Greek aesthetics of existence is unlike the will to truth which lends support to the development of modern forms of power.

What must be emphasized is that Foucault's idea of an aesthetic subject should not be read as an attempt to construct an a priori theory of the subject as the basis of resistance. In contrast to Habermas, Foucault does not set up an a priori notion of the subject who stands outside power and resists power. Instead, he talks about a way of becoming the subject which is inseparable from practices of power-knowledge. This way of becoming the subject, as found in the Greek aesthetics of existence, involves subjection and pursuits of truth and knowledges. Nevertheless, the mode of subjection and the way in which the subject relates to truth and knowledges are different from what one has in modern western societies. While individuals are subjected to rules, Foucault's view of aesthetics emphasizes not a subjection to a universal and precise code, but rather a practice which adapts behavior according to circumstances and needs. While truth and knowledges are required for self-constitution, they are sought only for a certain specific use. Individuals are not expected to search for the truth. In contrast to Habermas's pursuit of the true nature of rational subjects, individuals who opt for an aesthetics of existence are not expected to ponder their true nature, to reveal the truth, or to speak the truth. They are, therefore, not drawn into confessional relationships in which certain authorities interpret their nature and prescribe their way to freedom.

## Conclusion

In contrast to Habermas's claim of his project moving away from the philosophy of the subject, I point out that his theory of communicative action still relies upon an a priori notion of the modern rational subject who possesses certain linguistic competences. Habermas's reliance upon a certain notion of modern rational subject not only reveals his failure to overcome the problems of the philosophy of the subject, but also allows Foucault to say something about his project. I argue that there are two kinds of challenge that Foucault has for Habermas: one uses Foucault's thesis of an exclusion of otherness to criticize Habermas; the other considers Habermas's weakness from the perspective of a strategic model.

In terms of the thesis of an exclusion of otherness, Habermas's discussion of the rational subject, which emphasizes both the obligation and competence of providing grounds for one's claims, excludes and condemns those who fall below the standard as the other. Specifically, it excludes those who remain privatistic about their feelings or those who refuse to fulfil the obligation of the rational subject as deviant. It also excludes those who lack argumentative capabilities as irrational, and they are likely to be women in a male-dominated society. In demanding that we prove our claims and justify our feelings, Habermas fails to recognize that his demand implies a subjugation of the other.

While one may criticize Habermas in terms of an exclusion of the other, nevertheless, I contend that this way of drawing insights from Foucault presupposes a negative concept of power that Foucault himself seeks to surpass. It assumes that if Habermas's project has a problem, it has to do with its negating a certain subjectivity. I argue that when considering Foucault's challenge from the perspective of a strategic model, the problem of Habermas is not so much an exclusion of the other as a production of certain modern subjectivities.



Habermas's theory of communicative action presupposes an a priori notion of an autonomous, rational subject who engages in free, undistorted, and reflective discussion. It overlooks the fact that modern forms of power operate precisely through a production of rational and autonomous subjectivity. The operation of modern forms of power relies upon a constitution of individuals as rational subjects who freely discuss their sex, or as autonomous and reflective subjects who ponder their true nature. Instead of merely pressing upon itself the question of an exclusion of the other, I suggest that Habermas's theory has to be questioned in terms of its production of certain modern subjectivities which may provide the condition of existence for modern forms of power.

From the perspective of a strategic model, Habermas's ideal of a rational, autonomous, and reflective (inter)subjectivity is exposed to be misguided comfort. Modern subjectivities, in addition to truths and knowledges, are shown to be involved in the operation of power. What shall we do with this modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance?

Foucault's discussion of the Greek aesthetics of existence, I contend, should not be read as a theory of the subject which provides us a new basis of hope. Instead, it provides us with an example of a form of becoming the subject which is not in line with the modern practices of power-knowledge. This example, however, is not to be copied or transplanted in any society. It only allows us to have a glimpse of what an alternative knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance might look like. One has to start thinking about that alternative in one's own specific cultural site of struggle. Moreover, one must bear in mind that, in seeking to have an alternative, the "alternative" should not be imagined as something outside the power-knowledge practices. One is rather playing another game within the practices that are available.

As Foucault says, "[w]e escaped then a domination of truth, not by playing a game that was a complete stranger to the game of truth, but in playing it otherwise or in playing another game, another set, other trumps in the game of truth" (Foucault, 1988a:15). The Greek aesthetics of existence, for instance, also requires one to submit to truth. However, one cares for truth only because one cares for self. Truth is

only pursued for a certain specific use. The pursuit of truth does not demonstrate a will to truth which lends itself to an intensification of modern forms of power. Instead, it serves the transformation of one's life into a free and beautiful existence. What we need are therefore innovative ways of self-constitution and of using truth which may subvert the modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance. Foucault's discussion of the Greek aesthetics of existence, as I showed, helps us reflect upon what they might look like.

Thinking has been understood as an opposing force to myth, and yet Horkheimer and Adorno proclaim that "[m]yth is already enlightenment and enlightenment reverts to mythology."<sup>1</sup> In Habermas's view, the critique of enlightenment proffered by Horkheimer and Adorno is one-sided and totalizing. For it sees that "the process of enlightenment is from the very beginning dependent on an impulse of self-preservation which mutilates reason because it can only make use of it in the form of purposive-rational domination of nature and intellect" (Habermas, 1987b:17). Therefore, Habermas continues, what it says about enlightenment is a domination of an objectified external nature and a repressed inner nature; what it sees is enlightenment is domination. Habermas criticizes this view of enlightenment as one-sided since it fails to affirm the achievements of the Enlightenment which manifest elements of reason. Moreover, he contends that their critique is totalizing since it turns against reason and deprives itself of the ground of critique.

In Habermas's view, Foucault's critique has made the same mistake. He comments that Foucault's totalizing critique turns against truth and deprives itself of the ground of critique. For him, Foucault's last essays on "Enlightenment demonstrates that he has come to recognize the mistake he made and seeks to have a notion of reason to ground his critique. Habermas says, Foucault

<sup>1</sup> In his critique of Horkheimer and Adorno, Habermas refers to the works of Nietzsche and Foucault as the other variant of the totalizing critique. He says that Foucault sees a plurality of power/discourse formations which can be differentiated according to their style and intensity, but cannot be judged in terms of their validity. See Habermas, 1987b, pp. 205-206. Also see Habermas, 1987a, for his most systematic critique of Foucault.

## Chapter 6

### ENLIGHTENMENT, POWER AND CRITIQUE

In a critique of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Habermas (1982b) comments that enlightened thinking has been understood as an opposing force to myth, and yet Horkheimer and Adorno proclaim that "[m]yth is already enlightenment; and enlightenment reverts to mythology". In Habermas's view, the critique of enlightenment provided by Horkheimer and Adorno is one-sided and totalizing. For it sees that "the process of enlightenment is from the very beginning dependent on an impulse of self-preservation which mutilates reason because it can only make use of it in the form of purposive-rational domination of nature and instinct" (Habermas, 1982b:17). Therefore, Habermas continues, what it sees about enlightenment is a domination of an objectified external nature and a repressed inner nature; what it sees is: enlightenment is domination. Habermas criticizes this view of enlightenment as one-sided since it fails to affirm the achievements of the Enlightenment which manifest elements of reason. Moreover, he contends that their critique is totalizing since it turns against reason and deprives itself of the ground of critique.

In Habermas's view, Foucault's critique has made the same mistake.<sup>1</sup> He comments that Foucault's totalizing critique turns against truth and deprives itself of the ground of critique. For him, Foucault's last essays on Enlightenment demonstrate that he has come to recognize the mistake he made and seeks to have a notion of reason to ground his critique. Habermas says, Foucault

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contrasts his critique of power with the "analysis of truth" in such a fashion that the former becomes deprived of the normative yardsticks that it would have to borrow from the latter. Perhaps the force of this contradiction caught up with Foucault in this last of his texts, drawing him again into the circle of the philosophical discourse of modernity which he thought he could explode. (Habermas, 1986:108)

For Habermas, Foucault's later writings, which identify the connection of his project with the Enlightenment, represent a pro-Enlightenment stance which contradicts his anti-Enlightenment position in the earlier work. Foucault, indeed, identifies Enlightenment as a certain attitude, a certain philosophizing ethos, which characterizes his project. But does it mean that Foucault is now identifying with the Enlightenment and seeks to remain within its tradition? Does it mean that Foucault is now affirming the achievements of the Enlightenment and treating them as elements of reason that have to be preserved? Has Foucault adopted, as Habermas sees it, contradictory positions in his discussions of Enlightenment?

Before discussing Foucault's ideas of Enlightenment, there is a need to clarify two related but distinct senses of "Enlightenment": one referring to a historical period; the other referring to a certain attitude or orientation. When Foucault says that the Enlightenment, which discovered liberties, also invented the disciplines, he is referring to "Enlightenment" as a historical period. In contrast, his later work on "What is Enlightenment?" discusses Enlightenment as a certain attitude or a certain way of philosophizing that has affinities with his project. What must be noticed is that while Foucault uses the term "Enlightenment" in these two senses, he treats them as relatively independent. His approach to Enlightenment is: what is to be made of Enlightenment? He does not see that there is a certain orientation that defines the essence of the Enlightenment period. Instead, for him, based on different perspectives and purposes, one can approach that period in different ways and make different things out of it.

Habermas's use of the term "Enlightenment" also contains these two senses. Nevertheless, in contrast to Foucault's treating them as relatively

independent, he tends to see that it is the Enlightenment attitude or orientation which defines the Enlightenment period. In arguing against a totalizing critique of Enlightenment, Habermas maintains that there are achievements of the Enlightenment that should not be overlooked. Here Habermas's use of "Enlightenment" mainly refers to a historical period. But why does he say that we should not overlook the achievements? It is because, for him, they represent a certain orientation that is essential to the Enlightenment period and that has to be preserved; if one is to evaluate the Enlightenment, one must not leave out this core aspect of the Enlightenment.

For Habermas, the orientation of the Enlightenment is expressed in terms of the project carried out by the eighteenth century philosophers, which aimed at developing objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art, according to their inner logic. According to Habermas,

this project intended to release the cognitive potentials of each of these domains to set them free from their esoteric forms. The Enlightenment philosophers wanted to utilize this accumulation of specialized culture for the enrichment of everyday life, that is to say, for the rational organization of everyday social life. (Habermas, 1981:9)

Habermas thinks that this orientation, or the intentions of the Enlightenment thinkers, is the essence of the Enlightenment period. One should not overlook them by adopting a totalizing critique. Moreover, in his view, one should preserve this orientation by carrying on the project of Enlightenment, and he understands his work as a continuation of that project. He carries on the Enlightenment project not only by holding on to the intentions of the Enlightenment philosophers, that is, utilizing the rational and cognitive potentials of science, universal morality and art to promote social and political emancipation, but also by reconstructing a notion of communicative reason as the essential kernel of the Enlightenment that has to be preserved.

Foucault's inquiries of Enlightenment, in contrast, are "not oriented retrospectively toward the 'essential kernel of rationality' that can be found in the Enlightenment and that would have to be preserved in any

event"(Foucault, 1986f:43). While he identifies Enlightenment as a certain critical attitude that characterizes his project, he does not mean that this attitude is what defines the essence of the Enlightenment period. He sees the Enlightenment as a set of events and complex historical processes, which are not governed by a unified system of rationality, nor do they possess any necessary coherence amongst them.<sup>2</sup> Instead, each may have specific conditions of existence and produce specific effects. From this perspective, Foucault comes to have a rather different view of the Enlightenment period from Habermas.

In the first part of this chapter, I shall discuss Foucault's view of the Enlightenment period, and elaborate on its insights for Habermas's theory. Foucault sees that it is power that provides the specific conditions of existence for certain Enlightenment reforms, and it is these reforms that produce effects of power and domination. In showing how the Enlightenment transmits and puts in motion relations of domination and disciplinary methods of subjugation, Foucault brings to light the dark side of the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, do Foucault's insights consist merely in exposing the dark side of the Enlightenment? Is Foucault's critique of the Enlightenment, as Habermas sees it, pessimistic and one-sided? I argue that Foucault is aware of both the bright side and the dark side of the Enlightenment, for he says that the Enlightenment has discovered liberties as well as invented disciplines. What Foucault pursues is not a one-sided criticism of the Enlightenment. Instead, he seeks to show the strategical integration between power and the Enlightenment, which has implications for Habermas's theory and for his evaluation of the achievements of the Enlightenment.

In the second part of the chapter, I shall examine Foucault's later essays on Enlightenment, which mainly concern the other sense of the term "Enlightenment", that is, Enlightenment as an attitude. Habermas sees

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<sup>2</sup> Dean (1994:57) points out that from Foucault's perspective, enlightenment should not be seen as "a unified process coherent or consistent across all specific facets and instances of rationalization ... What emerges is an understanding of plural, non-unified, systems of rationality, possessing no necessary coherence amongst themselves, and having specific, and analyzable conditions of existence". See his discussion of Foucault's view of enlightenment in Dean, 1994, Chapter 3.



Foucault's later essays as representing a position which is contradictory to his earlier anti-Enlightenment stance. He understands it as a sign of Foucault's concession to defeat, for Foucault is now coming to search for a notion of reason to ground his critique. Reading Foucault in this way, Habermas would naturally find that he has nothing to learn from Foucault. I would like to show that Foucault's discussion of Enlightenment subverts the distinctions and binary oppositions -- reason/unreason, emancipation/domination, pro-Enlightenment/anti-Enlightenment -- that underline Habermas's theory, and provides us with an alternative way of upholding reason which is no longer preoccupied with the construction of a normative notion for the differentiation and judgement of these distinctions.

### 6.1 Achievements and Evils of the Enlightenment

In a critique of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Habermas argues that one should maintain a balanced view of the Enlightenment by distinguishing between the achievements and the evils of the Enlightenment. While there are irrationalities and evils of the Enlightenment, Habermas contends, the achievements of the Enlightenment should be seen as elements of reason which provide hope for emancipation. Habermas's project is guided by the problematic of constructing a notion of reason according to which the achievements and the evils of the Enlightenment can be differentiated. Based on the transcendental project of reconstruction of universal pragmatics of language, Habermas identifies an internal relation between communicative action and reason and constructs a notion of communicative reason according to which one can differentiate the good side and the bad side of the Enlightenment.

Habermas holds that the development of sciences as well as the development of universal law and morality and the establishment of the system of rights should be seen as an expression of communicative reason, for

their cognitive potential points toward a consensus which is based on the mere force of the better argument. These developments, he contends, should be considered as the achievements of the Enlightenment, and they manifest a form of rationality that has to be preserved. In affirming the value of these developments, Habermas is, nevertheless, aware of the problems associated with the development of science and technology. As discussed in Chapter 4, he provides a critique of science and technology in terms of their role in the formation of ideologies that suppress public discussion and discursive will formation. He regards the domination of purposive-instrumental rationality as a major pathology of modern societies. In other words, Habermas sees that the development of science has its own problems. Nevertheless, for him, the development of the universal law and morality and the establishment of the system of rights, which rely upon communicative action for action coordination, should be seen as elements of reason, as achievements of the Enlightenment.

Foucault extends his critique of the Enlightenment to the spheres which provide Habermas with comfort. He shows the problems, or evils, associated with the development of universal law and morality and the establishment of the system of right. He demonstrates that the Enlightenment discourses and reforms provide the condition of existence for new forms of power and relations of domination. He says that "the system of right, the domain of law, are permanent agents of these relations of domination, these polymorphous techniques of subjugation" (Foucault, 1980c:96).

In showing that the Enlightenment is intermeshed with new forms of power, Foucault does not intend to assert that Enlightenment is evil, nor that reason is domination. Otherwise, Foucault would be, as Habermas contends, undertaking a totalising critique of Enlightenment.<sup>3</sup> What Foucault seeks to show are the specific relations that exist between power and the Enlightenment discourses, rationalities, reforms and practices. In this part of

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<sup>3</sup> Dean (1994:128-9) argues that Habermas attributes to Foucault a general position within the discourse of modernity in order to criticize his work as a totalizing critique. He criticizes Habermas's reading of Foucault's argument as "knowledge is power"; "reason is domination".

the chapter, I shall first use some of the examples of the Enlightenment reforms to illustrate the ways in which the Enlightenment is intermeshed with relations of power and domination. Specifically, I want to show that while the Enlightenment establishes an egalitarian juridical framework in which social contract and rights are constantly emphasized, nevertheless, there are instances in which the emergence of the bourgeoisie as the dominant class and the development of disciplinary power constitute the other side of it. After examining the specific relations between power and the Enlightenment, I shall elaborate on Foucault's insights for Habermas's theory.

### *Power and the Enlightenment*

Foucault's study shows that while the Enlightenment reforms establish a formal egalitarian juridical framework which puts stress on rights and justice, nevertheless, they also bring about new legislation that is utilized and annexed in the global form of capitalist domination. In effect, the Enlightenment reforms privilege the property class and uproot the conditions of existence of people from the lower strata.

According to Foucault (1979a:82-9), Enlightenment reformers not only called for a delimitation of the power of the monarch<sup>al</sup> sovereignty to punish, but also attacked the popular illegalities that were widely practised under the ancient monarchal regime. Foucault writes that under the ancient regime the lower strata of the population benefited from the practice of tolerated illegalities. This space of tolerance was for them indispensable as a condition of existence. For instance, vagabondage was supposed to be severely punished according to the terms of the ordinance, but they were rarely implemented. This provided the condition of existence for the unemployed as well as workers who had left their employers, for domestic servants who had fled their masters, for deserting soldiers and so forth. Moreover, peasant's refusal to pay certain state rents and the non-application of artisans of manufacturing regulations were seen as acceptable in the eyes of



some landowners or entrepreneurs. Smuggling was even welcomed by the entire population and protected by officials. The popular illegalities, according to Foucault, formed part of the political and economic life of the society.

In the eighteenth century, Foucault writes, the Enlightenment discourse of legal rights turned into a discourse about illegalities of properties. This discourse coincided with the interest of the bourgeoisie who gradually disapproved illegalities with regard to their own property rights. The transition to intensive agriculture witnessed a more and more restrictive pressure over various tolerated practices and the rights to use common lands. These tolerated practices, or tolerated 'rights', came into conflict with the new landowners' capacities to use property for purposes they saw fit. Tolerated rights including the right to free pasture and wood-collecting were now regarded as theft that had to be punished. In the field of commerce and industry, the construction of large warehouses was a step to prevent the theft of raw materials, tools or produce. Practices which almost amounted to acquired rights, such as the right to collect bits of iron or rope around ships or to resell the sugar sweeping, were now regarded as intolerable. Other practices which were once accepted morally, like the smuggling of the pilferers, were ruled out under the introduction of new legislation.

The setting up of new legislation to attack popular illegalities, in effect, privileges the property class and uproots the conditions of existence of the people in the lower strata. In Foucault's view, the introduction of this legislation is not based on general interest or popular consent, but rather maintained by force. He says:

although the new criminal legislation appears to be characterized by less severe penalties, a clearer codification, a marked diminution of the arbitrary, a more generally accepted consensus concerning the power to punish (in the absence of a more real division in its exercise), it is sustained in reality by an upheaval in the traditional economy of illegalities and a rigorous application of force to maintain their new adjustment. (Foucault, 1979a:89)

Foucault argues that the introduction of the new criminal legislation implies a class-based redistribution of illegalities that favours the bourgeoisie and disadvantages the worker. Workers are increasingly subjected to the criminal law grounded in property, while the bourgeoisie retains the laws that define illegalities through rights.

This great redistribution of illegalities was even to be expressed through a specialization of legal circuits: for illegalities of property -- for theft -- there were ordinary courts and punishments; for the illegalities of rights -- fraud, tax evasion, irregular commercial operations -- special legal institutions applied with transactions, accommodations, reduced fines, etc. The bourgeoisie reserved to itself the fruitful domain of the illegality of rights. (Foucault, 1979a:87)

A remark has to be made here. In examining the relationship that exists between the attack on popular illegalities and the interest of the bourgeoisie, Foucault does not intend to posit a general thesis that the Enlightenment discourse or reform is essentially an instrument used by the bourgeoisie to dominate the proletariat or the lower class. He suggests that one should avoid a descending analysis which sees power as starting from the centre, permeating to the base, and reproducing itself down to the most molecular elements of society. One must rather conduct an ascending analysis of power, that is, starting from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each has its own history and its own trajectory, and see how these mechanisms have been colonized, utilized, transformed and extended by forms of global domination (Foucault, 1980c:99). In this case, Foucault starts from the mechanism of the attack of popular illegalities, which has its own history in the Enlightenment reform and is relatively autonomous to the power of the bourgeoisie, and examines how it has been annexed and utilized by a global form of domination. It is from the same perspective that Foucault analyzes the relationships that exist between the Enlightenment and disciplinary power.

Foucault does not merely see the Enlightenment in terms of its relationship with the global form of capitalist domination. He also provides a novel analysis of the relationship between the Enlightenment -- its discourse,

rationalities, reforms and practices -- and a new form of power -- the disciplines. Foucault makes this claim: "'Enlightenment', which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines" (Foucault, 1979a:222).

Foucault's study, in *Discipline and Punish*, shows the changes of the forms of punishment from torturing and public display to correction, control and surveillance in prison. In contrast to the interpretation that these changes represent a progress in human history or a progress of human rights, Foucault sees them in terms of the emergence of a new economy of power. Foucault argues that it is owing to the need of a new economy of power that a change in the punitive practice is brought about. Instead of assuming that the Enlightenment discourses and reforms lead to a change in punitive practice, Foucault draws our attention to the broader socio-historical processes in which the need for a new economy of power emerges, and argues that it is the basis on which the change in punitive practice is made possible.

In the classical period, Foucault writes, public executions served to manifest the power of the monarch. The application of torture on the body of the criminal was intended to be a demonstration of the vengeance of the sovereign. Nevertheless, the spectacle of public executions had increasingly become an occasion for the crowd to support the criminal rather than the monarch. The tyranny often had to confront rebellion (Foucault, 1979a:74). As public executions resulted in a weakening rather than an enhancement of the power of the monarch, there emerged a need to minimize the political cost to punish.

In addition, the change in punitive practice was correlative with the shift in the pattern of crimes (Foucault, 1979a:75). From the end of seventeenth century, Foucault writes, crimes started to lose their violence: offences against property seemed to take over crimes of murder and physical assault; crimes were conducted by small groups or skilled individuals rather than by large organized armed gangs. This changing pattern of crime, according to Foucault, requires a less intense but a more detailed and interventionist form of punishment. In his words,



the shift from a criminality of blood to a criminality of fraud forms part of a whole complex mechanism, embracing the development of production, the increase of wealth, a higher juridical and moral value placed on property relations, stricter methods of surveillance, a tighter partitioning of the population, more efficient techniques of locating and obtaining information: the shift in illegal practice is correlative with an extension and a refinement of punitive practices. (Foucault, 1979a:77)

Foucault argues that it is in response to the need for a new economy of power that a change of the form of punishment results. He supports his argument through a scrutiny of the discourses of the Enlightenment reformers. He points out that the discourses were not so much directed at the cruelty of those in authority as at the bad economy of power. According to Foucault, reformers criticized that there was too much power for the lower jurisdiction, for judges, for persecutors, for royal magistrates and for the king, as they were able to make arbitrary legal decisions. Moreover, reformers saw the confusion of the law and of its implementation as a result of the multiplicity of courts and overlapping of different legal systems. Therefore, Foucault argues, even from the perspective of reformers, a new economy of power should replace the badly regulated distribution of power, so that it is neither too concentrated at certain privileged points nor too divided between opposing authorities (Foucault, 1979a:79-80).

In Foucault's view, the aim of the reform movement can be understood in terms of the setting up of a new economy of power so as to ensure its better distribution. Power is to be "distributed in homogeneous circuits capable of operating everywhere, in a continuous way, down to the finest grain of the social body". The effects of distribution are to be "more regular, more effective, more constant, more detailed"(Foucault, 1979a:80). On the one hand, the effectiveness of power is to be increased; on the other hand, the cost of the exercise of power has to be reduced. This is what is meant by an economy of power: an increase of its effectiveness and a diminution of its costs. As mentioned before, one of the costs of the past punitive practice lies in the danger of rebellion aroused in public executions. Now with a series of

techniques that guarantee its discretion, its low exteriorization and its relative invisibility, power penetrates deeper into the social body and causes lesser resistance.

Foucault elaborates on how the Enlightenment reforms of corrective practice put in motion techniques and methods of disciplinary subjugation. For reformers, criminals paid their debt to the society through punishment; yet it was through the corrective practices in prison that individuals were restored as the subject of the law. The corrective practices emphasized the principle of work. Prisoners were put to compulsory work and rewarded individually. This was intended to integrate them into the economy and restore them as juridical subjects. Nevertheless, Foucault argues, in order to accomplish this aim, a series of disciplinary techniques were used. Their daily life was partitioned according to an absolutely strict time-table. Each moment was to be devoted to a particular activity; duties and prohibitions of each moment were specified (Foucault, 1979a:124). Prisoners were also distributed in space. This not only broke dangerous communication, but also allowed their supervisors to locate, to observe and to supervise each individual.

Disciplinary techniques are applied onto the body to shape its movements, its gestures, its habits. They coerce the body in a continuous and subtle way. In contrast to the claim of the Enlightenment reform, Foucault claims, disciplinary techniques -- time-tables, regular activities, compulsory movements, solitary meditation, silence, work in common -- are used not so much to restore the individual as a juridical subject but to produce an obedient subject, to produce a docile body (Foucault, 1979a:128).

Besides bringing to light the disciplinary coercion used by the reformed punitive practice, Foucault demonstrates that the Enlightenment reforms give rise to new relations of domination. In contrast to the Enlightenment discourses which emphasize an equality between each fellow being, Foucault argues that what is involved in discipline is a non-reversible subordination of one group of people by another, a surplus of power that is fixed on the same side, and an inequality of position between different groups of people. The relations of domination are entirely different from that of

contractual obligation (Foucault, 1979a:222-3). This can be illustrated by the relationship between the prisoner and the supervisor that exists in the reformed punitive practice.

On first entering the prison, Foucault writes, prisoners were read the regulations and the supervisor would make them promise to do their duty. Not only did the supervisor make prisoners obey through persuasion, the supervisor also made them behave well with the power to punish. Disobedience would lead to physical punishment, deprivation, humiliation and solitary confinement. Furthermore, prisoners were dependent upon the comments of the supervisor for pardons. The supervisor was granted the power to determine whether one could be released earlier. All these guaranteed a non-reversible subordination of the prisoner to the power of the supervisor. In such a relation of domination, power was constantly fixed on the side of the supervisor.

Moreover, in contrast to the Enlightenment discourses which stressed a transparent power, the exercise of the power to punish was characterized by secrecy (Foucault, 1979a:124-5, 129). As the penal reform advocated the principle of not publicizing the penalty, there was no longer any public display, nor was the prisoner required to serve any public work on the street. The public did not need to play the role of a witness of street spectacle. Punishment and correction now operated privately between prisoners and those who supervised them. As the relation between the one who punished and those who were punished was characterized by secrecy, the one who punished could exercise a total power, which no third party could disturb.

Foucault further argues that while, in prison, the supervisor becomes a judge, the judgement does not operate according to the law, but rather to the norm. The law defines what is legal and illegal; the norm defines what is normal and abnormal, who is dangerous and non-dangerous. The judgement is based on the development of a knowledge of each individual in prison (Foucault, 1979a:125-6).



When new prisoners arrived, Foucault writes, the administration received a report concerning the crime, a summary of the examinations of the defendants, notes on their behaviour before and after the sentences. Throughout the imprisonment their behaviour was observed and recorded by their supervisors. This resulted in an ever-growing knowledge of each of the prisoners. Based on this knowledge, prisoners were not only classified according to the crime they committed, but the dispositions they revealed. Prisoners were categorized according to the potentiality of danger within them. In this way, the prison became an autonomous apparatus of knowledge. It had its own rules, its own techniques, its own knowledge. It fixed its own norms and decided its own results (Foucault, 1979a:129).

Foucault's work shows that on the one hand, the reformers' discourses discover contract and rights as the major principles of the political sphere; on the other hand, they bring along a disciplinary technology which does not operate according to the principle of contract and rights. Instead of being a power which is rendered visible, transparent, localizable and controllable, the disciplinary technology operates in processes which are invisible, dispersed, secret and autonomous. While the juridical model of Enlightenment discourses seeks to restore the individual as the juridical subject, the disciplinary practice produces docile bodies; while the juridical model represents power as operating according to the law, the disciplinary power operates according to the norm.

In sum, the Enlightenment establishes a formal egalitarian juridical framework and lays the foundation for a democratic parliamentary regime; nevertheless, the emergence of the bourgeoisie as the dominant class and the development of disciplinary power constitute the other, dark side of it. Foucault says:

Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was marked by the establishment of an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative regime. But the development

and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes. The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. And although, in a formal way, the representative regime makes it possible, directly or indirectly, with or without relays, for the will of all to form the fundamental authority of sovereignty, the disciplines provide, at the base, a guarantee of the submission of forces and bodies. The real, corporal disciplines constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties. (Foucault, 1979a:222)

### *Foucault's challenge to Habermas*

Foucault shows that the Enlightenment, which discovers liberties, also invents the disciplines. The emergence of a new form of power -- the disciplines--constitutes the other, dark side of the process. But what is the challenge that Foucault's work poses to Habermas's theory? It cannot be denied that Foucault successfully brings to light the dark side of the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, one may say that this critical awareness of the Enlightenment is nothing new or original, and Habermas is certainly aware of its dark side. In academic literature as well as public discussion, there is an increasing awareness of the fact that science and technology create as many problems as they solve. It is recognized that on the one hand we live in an age of material comfort brought about by technological advancement, and on the other hand, we live in a world in which technology is used as a weapon of mass slaughter. The nightmare of Hiroshima still haunts the minds of people. Science, which promised to free us from superstition and tyranny, has led us to the road of destruction and self-destruction. Progress, a self-image of Enlightenment, is increasingly in doubt. The dream of Enlightenment is over; the faith in

Enlightenment is shaken. More and more people talk about progress into the abyss.

Habermas is among those who are critical of science and technology. In his view, Enlightenment has gone into an abyss with its spread of instrumental-purposive rationality to the extreme that communicative rationality is displaced. In his thesis "colonization of the lifeworld", he argues that the systemic mechanisms invade the lifeworld and replace the role of communicative action in the life-forms of the consumer, the employee and the citizen. As the life-forms of the consumer and the employee are subject to the imperatives of the economic system, they are one-sidedly rationalized in a utilitarian fashion. Consumerism, possessive individualism, hedonism, motives of competition and performance, and so forth gain strength. Moreover, bureaucratization and the dominance of experts displace the process of opinion formation of the citizen. In both the private and the public spheres, Habermas says, moral-practical elements are driven out by system imperatives (Habermas, 1987b:322-3, 325).

While being critical about the process of Enlightenment, Habermas maintains that one should have a balanced view of Enlightenment. He points out that in the spheres of science, morality and art, one can see the achievements of Enlightenment. Specifically, Habermas (1982b:18) refers to the theoretical self-reflection of scientific knowledge, to the development of universal law and morality which have been embodied in systems of right and in democratic political institutions, and to the liberating force contained in discourses of art criticism. In a critique of Adorno and Horkheimer's work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Habermas argues against their one-sided and pessimistic account of the Enlightenment. He proposes that one should see both the rational and the irrational elements, both the achievements and the evils of Enlightenment.

From Habermas's perspective, Foucault's work can be criticized as one-sided and pessimistic. Defenders of Foucault may say that, by bringing to light the dark of the Enlightenment, his contribution lies in stripping away the veil of the Enlightenment and counteracting the optimism of it. Nevertheless,



this way of defending Foucault, I contend, enables Habermas to charge that Foucault is pessimistic and holds a one-sided view of the Enlightenment. In addition, Habermas's work can be seen as outweighing Foucault's since it does not only emphasize the dark side but also the bright side of Enlightenment. Seeing Foucault's work in terms of its bringing to light the dark side of Enlightenment can, at most, add insights to what Habermas has said. Instead of posing any radical challenge to Habermas's theory, Foucault's insights can be assimilated into Habermas's project.

In order to appreciate the profundity of Foucault's insights, I suggest that one should not consider the difference between Foucault and Habermas in terms of pessimism and optimism, or of one holding a one-sided view and the other a balanced view. Their difference does not lie in the fact that Habermas is more optimistic and able to see the achievements of Enlightenment and the progress of human history, while Foucault is more pessimistic and emphasizes merely the evils of Enlightenment and talks about domination after domination. As mentioned before, Habermas is aware of both the achievements and the evils of Enlightenment. And Foucault too emphasizes that the Enlightenment discovers liberties as well as invents disciplines. In this sense, Foucault is, like Habermas, aware of both the bright side and the dark side of the Enlightenment. Neither of them adopts a one-sided view of it.

Foucault's challenge, I argue, lies in his providing an alternative to Habermas's approach to the Enlightenment. Habermas's approach, as I point out throughout my discussion in the thesis, is primarily preoccupied with the construction of a basis according to which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. In the context of the discussion of the Enlightenment, he is concerned with developing a notion of reason according to which one can differentiate achievements and evils of the Enlightenment. Foucault's work, in contrast, can be considered in terms of a strategic model which allows us to see a complex interplay between power and the Enlightenment, its discourses, rationalities, reforms and practices.

Seeing that there is an internal relation between reason and communicative practice oriented to understanding, Habermas suggests that

the notion of communicative action can serve as the measuring yard for the differentiation of achievements and evils of the Enlightenment. For instance, the development of universal law and morality, which is seen as a societal evolutionary trend toward a dependence on the communicative action as the mechanism of social integration, is welcome by Habermas as an achievement of the Enlightenment. For Habermas, the distinction between achievements and evils of the Enlightenment is at the same time a distinction between reason and unreason. He is critical of Horkheimer and Adorno, as well as Nietzsche and, who fail to affirm the achievements of the Enlightenment and the elements of reason that are manifested. He comments that they conduct a totalising critique of Enlightenment, and in this way they do not only turn against Enlightenment but reason, and thus deprive themselves of the ground of critique.

Foucault's work is not oriented toward the construction of a basis for the distinction between achievements and evils of the Enlightenment. Instead, it can be considered in terms of a strategic model which focuses on how the effects of power are produced. Foucault does not start from a transcendental notion of reason and ask: which parts of the Enlightenment are achievements or manifest elements of reason? He reverses the mode of analysis by first of all looking at the points where power effects are felt, where struggles are witnessed. Seeing that there are struggles against the power of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, of medicine over the population, of administration over people, Foucault traces these relations of domination to a modern form of power which took shape in the Enlightenment. He then analyzes how the Enlightenment discourses and reforms provide the rationalities and techniques for this modern form of power.

From the perspective of a strategic model, the Enlightenment discourses and reforms are seen in terms of their effects, and their roles in the deployment of disciplinary power. One should not rely on any transcendental notion to identify certain discourses or reforms as elements of reason. One cannot say that this and that reform is inherently good or bad, or is essentially

an element of reason or unreason. It is through looking at the effects produced, as well as the way in which it is taken up and used, can we begin to judge it. In this sense, one should not base on a notion of communicative action to identify the development of universal law and morality and the establishment of a system of rights as elements of reason, but rather analyze the development in terms of how universal law and rights are taken up and used, the effects that are produced, and the part they play in a deployment of power.

From the perspective of a strategic model, one sees that there is a tactical integration between the Enlightenment reforms and the new economy of power. On the one hand, it is the need for a new economy of power that provides the condition of existence for the reform of punitive practice. On the other hand, the reform of punitive practice transmits and puts in motion a series of disciplinary techniques and new forms of power and domination. As illustrated above by the example of the reformed punitive practice, the disciplinary technology operates in processes which are invisible, dispersed, secret and autonomous. The effects of power that are produced are more regular, more constant, more detailed.

From the perspective of a strategic model, the Enlightenment discourses and reforms are far from being an agent of emancipation. Instead, they are shown to be agents of coercion, agents of relations of domination. This is why Foucault says that

the system of right, the domain of <sup>the</sup> law, are permanent agents of these relations of domination, these polymorphous techniques of subjugation. Rights should be viewed, I believed, not in terms of a legitimacy to be established, but in terms of the methods of subjugation that it instigates. (Foucault, 1980c:96)

According to the insights of Foucault's work, Habermas's attempt to draw a line between achievements and evils according to a transcendental notion of reason is mistaken. His attempt to classify things once and for all misleads us to believe that certain things, such as the system of right, are unproblematic,



while in fact they can be like truths and knowledges, or subjectivities, integrated into a system of power and produce effects of domination.

For Habermas, the task is to distinguish between reason and unreason, achievements and evils of Enlightenment, legitimate and illegitimate power so as to disconnect one from the other. From Foucault's perspective, the task is, rather, to understand the intricacy between reason and unreason, between achievements and evils of the Enlightenment, between legitimate and illegitimate power. Habermas's approach, which presupposes a distinction and a disconnection of achievements and evils of the Enlightenment, tends to lose sight of the fact that the bright side of an Enlightenment reform is often intricately intertwined with its dark side.

Foucault's work shows that in attacking the monarch<sup>ic</sup>al form of sovereign power, one is also attacking the practice of popular illegalities. While the reform achieves a delimitation of the personal power of the sovereign, *at the same time* it uproots the conditions of the existence of the people from the lower strata. The achievement and the evil of Enlightenment go together. They go side by side with each other; they become the correlative of each other. In a similar sense, while the penal reform brings about a progress of human rights, in terms of the right from public display, torture and 'inhumane' treatment, *at the same time* it gives rise to new forms of domination and disciplinary coercion. The disciplinary power forms the foundation of the formal juridical liberties. The development of a system of rights and a representative democratic regime is sustained by the development of disciplinary power.

In light of Foucault's work, Enlightenment reforms which were previously seen as achievements, as well as <sup>the</sup> basis of hope in Habermas's project, are now questioned. This questioning, nevertheless, is not a condemnation of the achievements as evils; otherwise, Foucault's work can be criticized as one-sided and pessimistic. Instead, Foucault's questioning renders the status of the reforms, or achievements, ambiguous.<sup>4</sup> If one sees the

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<sup>4</sup> See Connolly, 1987; for a discussion of Foucault's insights in terms of the idea of ambiguity.

achievement of the Enlightenment reform in terms of a delimitation of the monarch<sup>ic</sup>al power to punish, this achievement is shown to be ambiguous because at the same time there is an attack against popular illegalities which uproots the condition of existence of people from the lower strata; if one sees the achievement of the penal reform in terms of a right from torture, this achievement is rendered ambiguous because at the same time there emerges a new form of power which coerces our body in a different way. "Achievements" are shown to be so much entangled with "evils" that they should no longer be seen as achievements in a pure, innocent and absolute sense.

Had one to evaluate the Enlightenment, perhaps what could be drawn from Foucault's work is this kind of ambiguous evaluation. As Foucault says, he does not intend to condemn Enlightenment or its rationality. What he wants to show is "how ambiguous things are", and that an irrationality is at the same time a certain form of rationality. In his words,

one should not forget -- and I'm not saying this in order to criticize rationality, but in order to show how *ambiguous* things are -- it was on the basis of the flamboyant rationality of social Darwinism that racism was formulated, becoming one of the most enduring and powerful ingredients of Nazism. This was, of course, an irrationality, but an irrationality that was *at the same time*, after all, a certain form of rationality. (Emphases added. Foucault, 1986e:249)

Reading Foucault in this way, one should be more able to see the problems associated with labelling Foucault as anti-Enlightenment. Since Foucault does not aim at a one-sided attack on the Enlightenment, he certainly should not be seen as anti-Enlightenment. Indeed, for Foucault, positions of pro-Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment are misleading. They are too simplistic to capture the intricacy of power and the Enlightenment. In Foucault's view, one has to refuse<sup>to</sup> choose between pro-Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment; one has to refuse everything which presents itself in the form of a simplistic and authoritarian alternative.

It even means precisely that one has to refuse everything that might present itself in the form of a simplistic and authoritarian alternative: you either accept the Enlightenment and remain in the tradition of its rationalism ... or else you criticize the Enlightenment and then try to escape from its principles of rationality ... And we do not break free of this blackmail by introducing "dialectical" nuances while seeking to determine what good and bad elements there may have been in the Enlightenment. (Foucault, 1986f:43)

Foucault's position in the earlier work should not be read as anti-Enlightenment; nor should his later writings on Enlightenment be seen as pro-Enlightenment. What Foucault seeks to challenge are these kinds of binary oppositions and "simplistic and authoritarian alternatives". I shall elaborate on this challenge of Foucault in my discussion of his later work in Part II.

## 6.2 "What is Enlightenment?"

In his later writings, Foucault takes up Kant's discussion of "What is Enlightenment?", and identifies Enlightenment in terms of a certain attitude and a certain way of philosophizing which have affinities with his project. For Habermas, these later essays demonstrate a pro-Enlightenment stance which is incompatible with Foucault's anti-modern stance in the earlier work. Habermas asks:

How does such a singularly affirmative understanding of modern philosophizing, always directed to our own actuality and imprinted in the here-and-now, fit with Foucault's unyielding criticism of modernity? How can Foucault's self-understanding as a thinker in the tradition of the Enlightenment be compatible with his unmistakable criticism of this very form of knowledge of modernity? (Habermas, 1986:106)



Habermas reads Foucault's later essays as a concession of defeat. He sees that Foucault has finally come to recognize the mistake he made in his totalizing critique of Enlightenment. Habermas comments that Foucault's critique deprives himself of the ground of critique, and that "the force of this contradiction caught up with Foucault in this last of his texts, drawing him again into the circle of the philosophical discourse of modernity which he thought he could explode" (Habermas, 1986:108).

The question that one would ask is: what is Foucault doing with his discussions of Kant's article "What is Enlightenment?"<sup>5</sup> In order to answer this question, we must examine more closely Foucault's discussions. I shall first summarize his reflection on the question "What is Enlightenment?" as well as the ways in which he finds affinities between Enlightenment and his project. Then I shall turn to Habermas's criticisms of Foucault. Is Foucault, as Habermas assumes, identifying with the Enlightenment tradition and adopting a pro-Enlightenment position which contradicts his earlier position? Is he, as Habermas does, trying to identify the positive elements of Enlightenment so as to ground his critique in a notion of reason?

Foucault discusses Kant's text "What is Enlightenment?" and identifies Enlightenment as a certain attitude. According to Foucault, Kant characterizes Enlightenment as a process which releases us from the status of immaturity. By "immaturity", Kant refers to a certain state of our will that makes us accept someone's authority. We are in a state of immaturity "when a book takes the

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<sup>5</sup> One should notice that Foucault had quite an extensive involvement with Kant's article. He returned to this topic at least on three occasions, each time drawing a slightly different implication from Kant's work. The best known of Foucault's discussions of Kant stems from a lecture delivered in the United States and published in 1984 by Paul Rabinow in *The Foucault Reader*. It links Kant's question about Enlightenment to Baudelaire's account of the experience of modernity. Another occasion that Foucault discussed Kant's article was in January 1983 when he opened a course at the College de France with a lecture. This time he links Kant's question "What is Enlightenment?" to his question "What is Revolution?" The other occasion which is the least known was in a 1978 lecture before the Societe francaise de Philosophie. Foucault links Kant's article to his work on the notion of governmentality and defined Enlightenment in terms of a resistance to specific forms of governmentalization (Schmidt and Wartenberg, 1994 :286). My discussion here mainly uses the first two essays. Also see Dean, 1994, Chapter 3; Gordon, 1986. For a discussion of Foucault's 1978 lecture, see Schmidt and Wartenberg, 1994, pp. 287ff.

place of our understanding, when a spiritual director takes the place of our conscience, when a doctor decides for us what our diet is to be". We are seen as immature since in these areas the use of reason is replaced by a submission to authority. To the extent that we give up the use of reason and submit to authority, we ourselves are responsible for our immaturity. In order to escape from the immaturity, we have to bring about the change in ourselves. Kant, therefore, does not only see Enlightenment as a historical process, but also presents it as a task and an obligation. Each individual is responsible for that overall process. Enlightenment is an act of courage to be accomplished personally. One has to give oneself a motto: "dare to know", "have the courage, the audacity, to know" (Foucault, 1986f:34-5).

In Foucault's reading of Kant's text, Enlightenment represents an attitude of having the courage to use reason rather than submitting to authority. This is an attitude of seeking to transgress the limits set by authority, an attitude of permanent questioning, an attitude of permanent critique. This attitude provides the motive for a particular way of philosophizing. Foucault identifies Enlightenment in terms of this way of philosophizing. He argues that Kant's text "What is Enlightenment?", which was written in 1784, can be seen in terms of the question of the present. It is an engagement in a mode of reflective relation to the present. This reflection upon the question of the present, Foucault claims, has affinities with his project: it is a type of philosophical interrogation "that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject". Through a reading of Kant's text, Foucault shows that the type of philosophical interrogation that his project pursues "is rooted in the Enlightenment" (Foucault, 1986f:42).

Foucault discusses Enlightenment in terms of a particular way of philosophizing which is centred upon the question of the present. While the question of the present has been posed by others, he argues that Kant's way of posing the question is novel. In other philosophical discussions, the present may be represented as belonging to a certain era of the world which is distinct from others through some inherent characteristics or dramatic events. Or the

present may be interrogated in an attempt to decipher in it the signs of a forthcoming event. The present may also be analyzed as a point of transition toward the dawning of a new world. Nevertheless, Foucault says, Kant is "not seeking to understand the present on the basis of a totality or of a future achievement", but rather dealing "with the contemporary reality alone" (Foucault, 1986f:34). When Kant asks "What is Enlightenment?", it is a question of the contemporary moment. "What is happening today? What is happening now? And what is this 'now' which we inhabit, and which defines the moment in which I am writing?" In short, "the question is: what is there in the present which can have contemporary meaning for philosophical reflection?" (Foucault, 1986a:88-9).

In Foucault's view, the question of the present can be seen "as a philosophical event incorporating within it the philosopher who speaks of it". Therefore, he argues, the question "What is Enlightenment?" points to an ontology of ourselves. Foucault states:

for the philosopher to pose the question of his own inclusion in the present (it) will no longer be a question of his adherence to a doctrine or a tradition; it will no longer even simply be the question of his belonging to a human community in general, but rather that of his membership of a certain 'we', a we corresponding to a cultural ensemble characteristic of his own contemporaneity. (Foucault, 1986a:89)

According to Foucault, this 'we', an identity of the philosopher, is <sup>for</sup> the first time problematized, and it begins to become an indispensable theme of philosophical reflection. The Enlightenment is seen by Foucault in terms of an ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves. It is considered in terms of a way of philosophizing which is guided by the questions: what is the present? what is ourselves in the present?

Foucault argues that Kant's essay on Revolution, which was written in 1789, represents another form of the question of the present. In answering whether there is a progress of mankind, he writes, Kant identifies progress in an *event* which has a singular, indeterminate, contingent character. In Kant's



view, what is significant in Revolution is not so much its success or failure, but the way it is perceived by the spectators. What constitutes a sign of progress is the enthusiasm of the spectators, the fact that "the Revolution is surrounded by a wishful participation that borders closely on enthusiasm" (Foucault, 1986a:93). This enthusiasm, for Kant, is the sign of a moral disposition of humanity. Foucault argues that this moral disposition is something that cannot even be elicited by the subtlest politician, but manifests itself "only in an indeterminate manner and as something in the character of a contingent event" (Foucault, 1986a:94). Therefore, for Foucault, instead of searching for origins and approaching history in terms of the necessary, Kant's essay represents a way of philosophizing which affirms the primacy of the singular, of the event, of the contingent.

Foucault contends that Kant's way of demonstrating progress has something that is akin to the perspective of genealogy. Genealogy is guided by the critical question: "in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints?" (Foucault, 1986f:45). Kant's essay, Foucault argues, can be read in terms of its affirmation of the importance of the singular, the contingent and the indeterminate event.

Putting together Kant's texts on Enlightenment and Revolution, that is, their emphases on an attitude of using reason rather than submitting to authority, their problematizing one's relation to the present and one's historical being, their stress on the contingent and the indeterminate, Foucault sees that Kant has founded a critical tradition of an ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves. This is where Foucault sees the connection between his project and Enlightenment. The thread that connects Foucault's project with Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather a philosophical ethos that can be described as a permanent critique of our historical era.

Foucault's way of identifying the connection between his project and Enlightenment, I argue, has several implications for Habermas's presumption. Habermas contends that Foucault now identifies with the Enlightenment

tradition, and adopts a pro-Enlightenment stance which contradicts his earlier position. Nevertheless, when<sup>15</sup> examined closely Foucault's discussion, it is doubtful if Foucault actually "identifies" with the Enlightenment tradition, or if he identifies with the Enlightenment tradition in the way Habermas assumes.

Habermas considers his project as a project of Enlightenment. In a short but pungent essay titled "Modernity versus Postmodernity", Habermas (1981:13) identifies Foucault as one of those "young conservatives" who adopt an antimodern stance and elaborate a totalist critique of modernity. In arguing against Foucault's anti-modern stance, Habermas holds that there are certain intentions of the Enlightenment philosophers that were essential to us and should be preserved. They include their efforts in developing objective sciences, universal morality and law, and autonomous art and their intentions to promote not only the control of natural forces, but also moral and social justice, as well as happiness of humankind. While seeing that the modernization process has not fulfilled the intentions of the Enlightenment, he believes that we should not lose our faith in Enlightenment. He asks: "should we try to hold on to the intentions of the Enlightenment, feeble as they may be, or should we declare the entire project of modernity a lost cause?" (Habermas, 1981:9) Habermas maintains that instead of declaring the project of Enlightenment a lost cause, we should carry on the project so as to fulfil the intentions of the Enlightenment.

Habermas's way of identifying with the Enlightenment tradition consists in holding on to what he finds as the cause or the intentions of the Enlightenment. Foucault, in contrast, pursues a rather different way of "identifying" with the Enlightenment tradition. His approach to Enlightenment is: *what is to be made of Enlightenment?* From different perspectives, or based on different purposes, one can make different things out of Enlightenment. From the perspective of power, what is made of Enlightenment is a set of rationalities and techniques that are ready to be annexed, transformed and extended by a new form of power. Enlightenment is to be examined in terms of its role in the deployment of modern power.

Nevertheless, from another perspective, what is made of Enlightenment can be a certain attitude, a certain way of philosophizing, which have affinities with a critical project. None of these approaches contain any faithfulness to the doctrines of the Enlightenment, doctrines like Rousseau's notion of social contract, Kant's three Critiques. On the contrary, they use and approach Enlightenment for their own purpose.<sup>6</sup>

For Foucault, there is a certain attitude, a certain way of philosophizing to be made of Enlightenment. Although he identifies the connection of his project with Enlightenment, he can hardly be described as an heir of the Enlightenment who carries on the project of Enlightenment. For he does not think that there are any essential doctrines of the Enlightenment to which we should be faithful. Nor does he think that we should fight for the cause of the Enlightenment. The critical task, for him, does not consist in laying faith or hope in Enlightenment. As he concludes the essay in this way, "I do not know whether it must be said today that the critical task still entails faith in Enlightenment; I continue to think that this task requires work on our limits" (Foucault, 1986f:50).

Therefore one cannot simply say that Foucault is now identifying with the Enlightenment tradition. Nor can one assume that Foucault now adopts a pro-Enlightenment stance which contradicts his earlier position. One must notice that what Foucault advocates is a philosophical ethos that involves a reflection on the limits that are imposed on us, a permanent critique of our historical era. His position about Enlightenment cannot be classified according to the dichotomy of pro-Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment. Foucault acknowledges that we are historically determined to a certain extent by the Enlightenment,<sup>7</sup> that Enlightenment constitutes the historical era in

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<sup>6</sup> In the 1978 lecture, Foucault approaches Enlightenment from the problematic of "governmentality" and sees Enlightenment as resistance to specific forms of governmentalization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See Schmidt and Wartenberg, 1994, pp.287ff.

<sup>7</sup> Foucault says: "We must try to proceed with the analysis of ourselves as beings who are historically determined, to a certain extent, by the Enlightenment ... these enquires will not be oriented retrospectively toward the 'essential kernel of rationality' that can be found in the Enlightenment and that would have to be preserved in any event; they will be oriented



which we are now living. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we have to accept the Enlightenment and lay our allegiance to it. On the contrary, in situating himself and his project in the historical era of Enlightenment, Foucault aims at a permanent critique of the Enlightenment, a permanent critique of the historical era in which he is living. This is what his earlier work was doing. It exposes the dark side of the Enlightenment and shows how new forms of power are intermeshed with the Enlightenment discourses and reforms.

One should not consider Foucault's earlier work as anti-Enlightenment. Nor should one see his later essays as shifting to a pro-Enlightenment stance. In identifying the connection of his project with the Enlightenment, Foucault is not coming back to the kind of operation that Habermas performs. He is not trying to determine which elements of the Enlightenment are good, and set up a model in relation to these elements in order to preserve them. Instead, he asks "what is to be made of the Enlightenment?", and considers that there can be a certain philosophizing ethos, which characterizes his project, to be made of it.

Foucault states, the philosophical ethos of the permanent critique of our historical era implies a refusal of the blackmail of Enlightenment, that is, either accept the Enlightenment and remain within its tradition, or else you criticize the Enlightenment and try to escape from its principles of rationality (Foucault, 1986f:42-3). One can find this blackmail of Enlightenment underlying Habermas's accusation of Foucault. Habermas assumes that Foucault adopts an anti-Enlightenment position in the earlier work by criticizing the Enlightenment and trying to escape from its principles of rationality, whereas in his later essays on Kant Foucault shifts to a pro-Enlightenment position and seeks to remain within its tradition. Habermas concludes that Foucault's positions are inconsistent and incompatible. Habermas's conclusion not only reveals his blackmail of the Enlightenment,

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toward the 'contemporary limits of the necessary,' that is, toward what is not or no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects" (Foucault, 1986f:43).

but also his overlooking Foucault's intention to subvert these simplistic alternatives and binary oppositions.

The novelty of Foucault's approach lies in its attempt to break free of the blackmail of Enlightenment. While Foucault criticizes the Enlightenment in terms of its relation to power, he is not, as Habermas sees it, making an unmistakable criticism which condemns the Enlightenment as evil. Instead, he shows us the danger of a certain Enlightenment discourse, rationality, reform and practice. Now in showing the affinities between his project and the Enlightenment, he is not, as Habermas understands it, identifying with the Enlightenment and trying to remain within its tradition. Instead, he sees that there can be a certain attitude to be made out of the Enlightenment. If Foucault's earlier work does not contain a determinate negation of the Enlightenment, nor does his later work contain an affirmation of it, then they cannot have constituted any incompatibility of positions. Rather than ask how can Foucault hold incompatible positions, Habermas should begin to appreciate Foucault's attempt to break free of the blackmail of Enlightenment.

One may say, doesn't Foucault now also come to examine the rationality of the Enlightenment? If the answer is "yes", can we say, as Habermas does, that Foucault is trying to search for a notion of reason in order to ground his critique?

It is true that both Habermas and Foucault come to examine the rationality of Enlightenment.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, unlike Habermas's project which seeks to construct a notion of communicative reason that serves as the basis for the differentiation of achievements and evils of the Enlightenment, of reason and unreason, of legitimate and illegitimate power, Foucault's work never attempts to construct such a normative basis for his critique. As noticed

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<sup>8</sup> Dreyfus and Rabinow (1986) point out that both Foucault and Habermas agree that critical reason begins with the rejection of any effort which seeks to develop theories that mirror substantive universal truths about human nature. Both agree that Enlightenment is a process which releases us from immaturity; and that maturity consists in man's taking over the responsibility for using his critical reason. Nevertheless, they claim, from here on their understanding of critical reason differ in a radical way. See Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986, for a discussion of the difference between Habermas and Foucault in their approach to reason.

by Dean, "the notion of reason that emerges in Foucault's work is not a normative but a performative one. It questions reason in its use, not as a norm by which various historical forms of reason can be evaluated" (Dean, 1994:115).<sup>9</sup> For Foucault, what matters is the use of reason, the effects of its use. He thinks that the central issue is:

What is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers? How can we exist as rational beings, fortunately committed to practicing a rationality that is unfortunately crisscrossed by intrinsic dangers? (Foucault, 1986e:249)

From Habermas's perspective, Foucault owes us a notion of reason that serves as the normative basis of critique. From Foucault's perspective, however, what must be examined is the use of reason. Foucault understands that there are different uses of reason. Some uses of reason, which Kant sees as illegitimate uses of reason, are what give rise to dogmatism and heteronomy, along with illusion. Other uses, which Kant sees as legitimate uses of reason, would assure the autonomy of reason (Foucault, 1986f:38). While both Foucault and Kant are concerned with the autonomy of reason, nevertheless, they approach it in an entirely different way.

For Kant, it is necessary to specify clearly the conditions that guarantee the autonomy of reason. Kant's three *Critiques*, Foucault says, can be seen as defining the conditions for the legitimate use of reason, the principles that assure the autonomy of reason. "[I]ts role is that of defining the conditions under which the use of reason is legitimate in order to determine what can be known, what must be done, and what may be hoped" (Foucault, 1986f:38). Kant lays down the critical tradition of philosophy which defines the conditions under which a true knowledge is possible. Habermas's project, I contend, represents a similar approach. He seeks to reconstruct the conditions under which rational consensus is possible, and refers to it as the basis of theoretical truth and universal morality. In his model of rational discourse,

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<sup>9</sup> Dean (1994:116) argues that "Foucault's approach to the question of rationality is thus multiple, pragmatic, practical, and problem-oriented, rather than unitary, formal, theoretic, and general".



Habermas defines the conditions under which the use of communicative reason is legitimate in order to determine what can be known, what must be done, and what may be hoped.

Contrary to Kant's or Habermas's approach, Foucault refuses to define conditions, to specify principles, or to set any limits. Instead, he puts his reason to use, without subjecting to any authority. His use of reason takes the form of permanent question, the form of permanent critique. He contends that if critique is to analyze and reflect upon limits, it is in order to transgress limits. He conducts a genealogical critique which "will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think" (Foucault, 1986f:46). This critique is not oriented toward the construction of a normative theory of reason, but rather demonstrates a certain use of reason. If Foucault's project is connected to Enlightenment, it is not through a normative theory of reason, but a certain attitude. It is an attitude of having the courage to question, having the courage to transgress limits. Foucault says, his critical ontology of ourselves

has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them. (Foucault, 1986f:50)

Habermas, preoccupied with how to construct a normative notion to ground critique, sees that Foucault, in discussing Kant's texts, is now searching for a notion of reason to ground critique. He misses the point that what concerns Foucault is not so much a normative notion of reason, but rather one's way of using reason. Unlike Habermas's project which is devoted to constructing a notion of communicative reason that serves as the universal standard of critique and provides the hope for emancipation, Foucault's project never attempts to construct such a notion. Nor would he believe in laying a hope upon any notion of reason or any theory of Enlightenment.

Foucault says that there is not anything that is functionally -- by its nature -- absolutely liberating. Liberty is never assured by the projects, theories or laws that are intended to guarantee it. Rather, "'liberty' is what must be exercised" (Foucault, 1986e:245). For Foucault, to engage in a permanent critique is an exercise of this liberty. This way of using reason represents an autonomy of reason. It is a use of reason which avoids dogmatism, heteronomy and illusion.

From Foucault's perspective, what concerns us is the way in which one uses reason. Habermas's effort to develop a quasi-transcendental basis of critique can be seen as a certain way of using reason. Habermas's way of using reason is, similar to Kant's, oriented to setting limits, defining conditions. His criticism of Foucault's lack of a ground of critique presupposes that this is the only legitimate way of using reason. Foucault's work, I argue, can be seen as an alternative way to use reason. It suggests that we should transform the use of reason from the form of setting necessary limits into one that takes a possible transgression. For Foucault, the use of reason is no longer to be practised in the search for universal structures, but rather in the form of a genealogical critique that gives impetus to the undefined work of freedom.

I contend that Foucault's insights consist in his presenting an alternative approach to Habermas's approach to the use of reason. Foucault's approach to the use of reason is not to be found in any transcendental project, but rather in a genealogical project and in an archaeological method.

Archaeological--and not transcendental--in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that

had finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom. (Foucault, 1986f:46)

In contrast to Habermas's project which is oriented to the search for universal conditions and the setting of necessary limits, Foucault's use of reason takes the form of a possible transgression of limits. Foucault's use of reason can be seen as an exercise of freedom, as a manifestation of the autonomy of reason. It works on the limits and asks what is no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects. It is oriented to inventing and re-inventing of ourselves. While it questions the historical era that determines who we are, it does not represent a determinate negation of the historical era in which we are now living. It is not preoccupied with setting up distinctions and binary oppositions between what must be negated and what must be preserved. Instead, it simultaneously respects the historical reality of the present and seeks to violate it. In this sense, Foucault's work should be appreciated in terms of its providing us with an alternative approach to critique, which subverts the distinctions and binary oppositions to which Habermas theory are wedded.

## Conclusion

Habermas's approach to critique, as I argue throughout the thesis, can be considered in terms of a juridico-discursive model which seeks to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. In a similar sense, his approach to the Enlightenment is concerned with a differentiation of achievements and evils, of what must be preserved and what must be condemned. It performs an operation of a division and rejection. The achievements of the Enlightenment are seen as elements of reason that have to be preserved; the evils of the Enlightenment are seen as elements of unreason that have to be rejected.



Foucault's approach, in contrast, can be considered as a strategic model which looks into the tactical integration between power and the Enlightenment, and the effects produced by the Enlightenment discourses, reforms and practices. For example, it shows that it is the need for a new economy of power that constitutes the condition of existence for the reform of punitive practice, and it is the reformed punitive practice that transmits and puts in motion methods of disciplinary subjugation and relations of domination. In showing the specific relations that exist between power and the Enlightenment, Foucault questions the role of the Enlightenment in the deployment of modern power. This question, however, is not equivalent to a simple rejection of the Enlightenment. Instead of seeing the Enlightenment as evil that has to be rejected, what Foucault demonstrates are the ambiguities of the achievements of the Enlightenment.

In Foucault's work, we see that the Enlightenment discourses and reforms are entangled with power, that there is an intricacy between achievements and evils of the Enlightenment, between rationality and irrationality, between legitimate and illegitimate power. From the perspective of Foucault's work, there may be irrationalities and relations of domination in the Enlightenment, but they are at the same time a kind of rationality and enlightened practice; and vice versa, the Enlightenment may bring about a certain freedom, but the freedom is at the same time a kind of unfreedom.

For instance, before the Enlightenment reform, the power of the monarchical<sup>ic</sup> sovereignty was unlimited; nevertheless, side by side, there was freedom for the subjects to practise illegalities which provided them with the conditions of existence. So much so that the reform achieved to limit the power of the monarchical sovereignty, the freedom to practise popular illegalities was also removed. Therefore, the relations between the reform of the sovereign power and the growth of freedom are not as simple as one may have believed. On the one hand, the reform of the sovereign power frees people from the uncontrollable power of the sovereign; on the other hand, it results in a reduction of their freedom to practise illegalities. In a similar sense, the relations between the reform of the punitive practice and the

growth of freedom are not as simple as one may have assumed. On the one hand, the reform frees people from torture and the force of the sovereign; on the other hand, it results in the development of a series of disciplinary techniques which coerce the body in a more regular and subtle way.

Foucault's work, therefore, subverts the distinctions and binary oppositions that underline Habermas's project. If there is an entanglement between power and the Enlightenment, between rationality and irrationality, between legitimate and illegitimate power, perhaps what we need is not so much an approach which operates by a simple division and rejection, but rather one which helps us respect the complex reality while seeking to transgress it. It is not one which is oriented to the drawing of boundaries and setting of limits, but rather oriented to the transgression of limits that are imposed on us.

While focusing on the problems of Habermas's theory, it does not mean that Foucault's work is unproblematic. I have discussed some of the limitations of his work in previous chapters. Here I shall focus on a major issue raised by his critics – the lack of a normative ground of Foucault's critique. Instead of accusing Foucault of failing to provide a normative basis of critique, I ask whether we must have a normative basis in order to practice critique, and whether Foucault has successfully shown us an alternative approach which does not require the specification of a

## Chapter 7

### CONCLUSION

My Introductory Chapter began by examining Habermas's criticisms of Foucault. I pointed out that Habermas's criticisms of Foucault are made in terms of his own preoccupation and his own language, and hence deprive Foucault's work of the right to stand on its own. Moreover, preoccupied with the question of the ground of critique, Habermas fails to see the insights of Foucault's work and the challenges it may have for his theory. I noted that Foucault does not address the question of the ground of critique and his suspension of this question creates difficulties, as both his critics and sympathetic commentators have pointed out. Nevertheless, in suspending the question of the ground of critique, I argue, Foucault introduces us to a strategic model of power, which is a perspective no less fruitful than Habermas's model of critique. In Part I of this concluding chapter, I shall summarize the insights of Foucault's strategic model and the challenges that Foucault's work poses to Habermas's theory. I argue that Foucault's strategic model shifts our attention to the question of "how", that is by what means the effects of power are produced and maintained. From this perspective, not only is Habermas's theory shown to be inadequate with regard to this problem, but a lot of its assumptions and ideals are exposed as misguided comfort.

While focusing on the problems of Habermas's theory, it does not mean that Foucault's work is unproblematic. I have discussed some of the limitations of his work in previous chapters. Here I shall focus on a major issue raised by his critics -- the lack of a normative ground of Foucault's critique. Instead of accusing Foucault of failing to provide a normative basis of critique, I ask whether we must have a normative basis in order to practise critique, and whether Foucault has successfully shown us an alternative approach which does not require the specification of a



normative yardstick. In Part II, I shall discuss the specific nature and characteristics of Foucault's approach to critique. I argue that Foucault does provide us an alternative to Habermas's normative approach, and Foucault's approach implies that normative frameworks should not be treated as principles of legitimation or foundations of critique, but rather as tools that one uses in the fight against power.

### **7.1 A Summary of Foucault's Challenge to Habermas**

Both Habermas's and Foucault's projects can be read as a critique of power. Nevertheless, Habermas is primarily preoccupied with the question of reconstructing the ground of critique. He sees the problem of earlier critical theory in terms of a totalizing critique; that is, one that turns against reason and hence deprives itself of the ground of critique. Contrary to treating reason as completely subjected to the dictates of bourgeois ideology and purposive-instrumental rationality, Habermas thinks that we must retain a notion of reason in order to ground critique. This notion of reason, Habermas contends, is a form of Enlightenment rationality that is expressed in the development of autonomous spheres of validity claims, namely the truth claim associated with science, the claim of normative rightness associated with universal law and morality, and the claim of authenticity and beauty associated with art. Habermas carries out a quasi-transcendental project of universal pragmatics to reconstruct this form of Enlightenment rationality as inherent to our intersubjective communication and calls it communicative reason. Hence for Habermas, the reconstruction of a notion of communicative reason, serves two purposes simultaneously: firstly, it serves to affirm the achievements of the Enlightenment and oppose any one-sided or totalist criticism of the Enlightenment; secondly, it serves to provide the ground of critique in reason.

Habermas maintains that the development of science and other knowledges, as well as the development of universal law and morality and the establishment of systems of right should be seen as an expression of this communicative rationality since their cognitive potential points toward a consensus based on the mere force of the better argument, that is, communicative reason. These developments, for Habermas, are the achievements of the Enlightenment, and they manifest a form of communicative rationality that has to be preserved. Habermas sees that although in the process of rationalization one has witnessed a domination of the purposive-instrumental rationality of the political-administrative and the economic systems at the expense of communicative rationality, nevertheless, he maintains, rather than declare the Enlightenment project a lost cause, one should carry on with it, by discovering, affirming, and promoting this communicative rationality. In Habermas's view, Foucault pursues a totalist critique of Enlightenment and fails to see its achievements. This results not only in a one-sided and pessimistic account of the Enlightenment, but also in a lack of the ground of Foucault's critique.

In Habermas's view, the major weakness of Foucault's project lies in its lack of a ground of critique. This means that Foucault's work cannot claim superiority according to the standard of truth and universal validity claims. In particular, Foucault's genealogical knowledges and the subjugated knowledges that he advocates cannot claim superiority according to the standard of truth, and hence these knowledges cannot differentiate themselves from falsehood. Moreover, since Foucault is unable to answer the question of "why fight?", the normative positions that Foucault presupposes or advocates would be unable to claim superiority according to the universal validity claim of normative rightness.

For Habermas, the reconstruction of the notion of communicative reason not only serves to affirm the achievements of the Enlightenment and allow critique to be grounded in reason, but also provides a basis with

which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. According to Habermas, the asymmetrical character of power relations implies that those who are subordinated are structurally disadvantaged since the one in higher authority can cause harm to them when they disobey. The disadvantage to one of the parties can only be compensated by reference to collectively desired goals. His notion of communicative action points toward an ideal way for the determination of collectively desired goals. Power which is based on the rational consensus achieved in communicative action is considered as legitimate. For Habermas, the question of how to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power is essential to any critique of power. From his perspective, Foucault can be criticized in terms of his failure to provide a yardstick for such a differentiation.

In sum, there are four kinds of task that Habermas seeks to accomplish with the construction of a notion of communicative reason. Firstly, he specifies what are the achievements of the Enlightenment and what should be preserved from it. Secondly, he reconstructs a notion of reason so as to enable knowledges to claim superiority according to the standard of truth. Thirdly, the notion of communicative reason allows normative positions to claim superiority according to the standard of universal validity claims. Lastly, Habermas considers the notion of communicative reason as a basis with which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power.

In contrast, Foucault seems to have produced nothing parallel to Habermas's achievement. He does not focus on the achievements of the Enlightenment in order to say what must be preserved. He does not appeal to any notion of truth to ground his knowledges, nor does he appeal to any normative notion to ground his positions. Foucault also fails to provide a yardstick for the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power. Nevertheless, instead of dismissing Foucault's work for these omissions, one must understand why Foucault brackets all these questions in order to see the insights resulting from the bracketing. Perhaps we could



start with why Foucault refrains from providing a yardstick for the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power.

The question of how to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power, I suggest, should be considered as part of the juridico-discursive model of power that Foucault seeks to surpass. According to Foucault, this model of power has several characteristics. Firstly, it represents power as operating like a law which merely negates, prohibits and says no. Secondly, it often privileges the theory of sovereignty. That is, it presupposes that power can be located in an identifiable source -- the sovereign -- be it the monarch in the past or the democratic sovereignty in modern western societies. Since power is represented as negative, the question thus raises is: how to impose limits upon the sovereign. Therefore, thirdly, the juridico-discursive model is preoccupied with how to submit power to the rule of right. It is concerned with what legitimates power, and how to draw the limits and boundaries. When power is exercised within limits and operates according to a principle of legitimation, it is considered as legitimate. Illegitimate power is one which violates the principle and transgresses its limit. I suggest that Habermas's view of power can be seen as juridico-discursive.

For Habermas, there is a problem associated with the asymmetrical character of power since the one in the higher position can sanction those who disobey. Nevertheless, instead of keeping this problem in focus and allowing it to remind us of the problem of power, Habermas is preoccupied with the question "what legitimates power?". He argues that power has to be legitimated with reference to collective goals, and his model of rational discourse is seen as providing the way for the determination of collective goals. Habermas, hence, provides a principle of legitimation for power. Illegitimate power is one which violates this principle of legitimation. Moreover, Habermas presupposes that power is located in an identifiable source, the sovereign, and seeks to submit it to the rule of right. Power, in his view, is located in the central political institutions, in the system of state administration. When power is

exercised within its confines, it is considered as legitimate. Power's transgression of its limits not only renders itself illegitimate but may also result in pathologies of modern societies. According to his thesis of the "colonization of lifeworld", modern pathologies are conceived as an intrusion of system mechanisms into the domain of lifeworld that requires communicative action as the mechanism of social integration. That is, they are explained in terms of an expansion of the role of state bureaucrats and experts that leads to a suppression of opinion formation in the lifeworld. Habermas is concerned with drawing the boundary between power as the system mechanism and communicative action as the mechanism of social integration. He seeks to confine power in the sphere of the political-administrative system and asserts the role of communicative action in the sphere of lifeworld. Thus, he is preoccupied with the task of submitting power to the rule of right. Foucault, in contrast, challenges this juridico-discursive mode of analysis.

In Foucault's view, we must break free from the juridico-discursive model of power, for the existence of power is not ensured by rights, but rather by techniques. The notion of right cannot explain how the effects of power are produced and maintained. Instead one should be concerned with the point where power surmounts the rules of right, invests itself in institutions, becomes embodied in techniques, and equips itself with instruments or more violent means of intervention. Only by focusing on the diverse local institutions and their concrete mechanisms, on the techniques and instruments, can one see how power is implemented effectively. In analyzing disciplinary power in modern societies, Foucault focuses on techniques like the partition of time, space and movement in order to show how power penetrates and is inscribed onto the body. Rather than ask what legitimates power, Foucault looks into how things work at the level of ongoing subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures and dictate our behavior.

Habermas pursues a juridico-discursive analysis of power which asks the question: what legitimates power? Preoccupied with the task of providing a principle of legitimation for power, Habermas fails to see that the existence of power is not ensured by rights, but by techniques. For instance, in terms of right, it is claimed that the prison restores the individual as a juridical subject. Nevertheless, focusing on the techniques and instruments that are used in prison, one sees that there are timetables, compulsory movement, regular activities, solitary meditation, work in common, which function not so much as a restoration of juridical subjects as a production of docile bodies. Hence, side by side with right, Foucault argues, there is disciplinary coercion which brings about docile bodies, obedient citizens. The focus on the issue of right in effect conceals the operation of disciplinary power. It leads to Habermas's failure to see the techniques of disciplinary power as well as the elements of domination inherent in its techniques. In addition, while the focus on the question of legitimation of power may result in a democratization of sovereign power, nevertheless, one fails to realize that at the same time this democratization of sovereignty is fundamentally determined by and grounded in techniques of disciplinary coercion.

Moreover, with a presupposition that power is located in the state administrative system, Habermas is unable to see the emergence of a new form of power--the disciplinary power--which is developed from a multiplicity of minor processes, of different origins and diverse locations, rather than from the central political institutions. The spread of disciplinary power is not as Habermas describes it, with the thesis of colonization of lifeworld, an intrusion of the system mechanisms into the lifeworld. It is, rather, understood as infinitesimal mechanisms, each with its own history, developed in diverse, local institutions including the family institution of lifeworld, and may be taken up and utilized by global forms of domination.

In suspending the question of the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power, Foucault aims at shifting our attention to the question



of "how power is exercised". This question of "how" is not asked in the sense of "how power manifests itself", but rather in the sense of "by what means power is exercised". In contrast to the juridico-discursive model, which pursues the normative question of what legitimates power, it is a strategic model which examines the totality of means put into operation to implement power effectively or to maintain it. From the perspective of the strategic model, Foucault shows us that, unlike what is represented by the juridico-discursive model, power is positive rather than negative, productive rather than repressive. One must, however, notice that this positive conception of power should not be considered from a normative point of view. The positivity of power does not carry any direct implication that power is therefore normatively desirable. While saying that power is productive and enabling, it does not imply that for that reason power is acceptable and legitimate. The positive concept of power is, instead, concerned with a strategic model which focuses on the concrete operation of power. According to this strategic model, in order for power to operate and produce effects, it must be productive: power produces utility; power produces subjectivities; power produces truths and knowledges.

From the perspective of the strategic model, we should be able to understand why Foucault refrains from appealing to the notion of truth to ground his work. Habermas demands that Foucault's knowledges, as well as the subjugated knowledges he advocates, should claim superiority according to the standard of truth. He sees that only in this way can they attain the status of truth and be differentiated from falsehood. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the strategic model, one is not concerned with the differentiation between truth and falsehood, but rather the effects of power produced. In Foucault's project, the problem is not to make a division between that which falls under scientificity and truth, and that which falls under ideology and falsehood. It is, rather, to see historically how power effects "are produced within discourses *which in themselves are neither true nor false*" (Foucault, 1980b:118). For instance, the medical discourses on masturbation and homosexuality in the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are not to be seen in terms of their truth and falsehood, but rather in terms of their production of certain subjects and their relation to the intensification of practices of knowledge-power. Foucault states that we must question not the truth or falsehood of certain discourses, but

their tactical productivity (what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure) and their strategical integration (what conjunction and what force relationship make their utilization necessary in a given episode of the various confrontations that occur).  
(Foucault, 1979b:102)

While Habermas is preoccupied with the question of the meaning of truth and universal validity claims, it is not a question central to Foucault's project; nor would his project seek to answer what is truth.<sup>1</sup> Foucault suspends the question of division between truth and falsehood in order to bring us to a strategic perspective which examines the power effects of discourses and knowledges.

Furthermore, central to people's experience in modern western societies, it is the power effects associated with discourses of *truth* and science that are of concern. For instance, it is through the development of criminal psychology that the power of penalty can be implemented effectively. This scientific knowledge reveals the true nature of the individuals and thus they can be judged in truth. In discussing the normalizing effects on individuals' sexuality, Foucault shows that situated at the intersection of a scientific discourse of sexuality and a technique of confession, there emerged a domain of sexuality as the target for therapeutic intervention. Individuals are assessed and diagnosed according to the scientific, true knowledge of medical and psychiatric professions. They are asked to confess, to speak the truth, to reveal the truth deep inside themselves. Power effects are produced through the

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<sup>1</sup> Hoy defends Foucault's bracketing of the question of truth claims by pointing out that Foucault's enterprise is neither epistemological nor ontological, but rather critical-historical. Instead of answering the question "what is truth?", it shows the relation between power and what counts as knowledge. See Hoy, 1986, pp.129ff.

production of truth. Therefore, Foucault claims, the problem is no longer falsehood or ideology but truth. It is truth rather than false ideologies that produces power effects.

Habermas's preoccupation with the issue of the ground of critique leads him to demand that Foucault's knowledges and the subjugated knowledges should claim superiority according to a notion of truth. Nevertheless, for Foucault, this is precisely the step he refuses to take. Foucault refuses to raise a banner of truth for his work, for what his work does is to problematize the status of truth and invite us to see the role that truth plays in a power complex. He states that "it's not a matter of a battle 'on behalf' of truth but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role which it plays" (Foucault, 1980b:132).

From the perspective of a strategic model, not only can we understand why Foucault refrains from appealing to a notion of truth to ground his work, we can also appreciate the insights of Foucault's work and the challenges that it has for Habermas. Habermas develops a model of rational discourse to elaborate how a cognitive truth claim is to be grounded in reason, that is, on the basis of the mere force of the better argument. With a presupposition of the notion of an ideal speech situation, his model of rational discourse asserts that truth, or true knowledge, is a result of noncoercive, undistorted and power-free discussion. The production of truth, in other words, is represented as free from power. Foucault, in contrast, shows power's production of truths and knowledges. For instance, in prison, the production of a whole corpus of individualizing knowledges was not outside power; on the contrary, it is a set of power relations that constitutes the condition for the development of the individualizing knowledges, relations including those of administrators and prisoners, or inspectors and prisoners. Similarly, the production of the truth of sex is only possible with power relations between patients and psychiatrists. Therefore, in opposition to Habermas's representation of truths and knowledges, Foucault urges us to "abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only



where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests" (Foucault, 1979a:27).

According to Foucault, there is a mutual production between power and these true knowledges, that is, on the one hand, power produces true knowledges, and on the other hand, it is through these knowledges that power effects are produced. The flaw of Habermas's model is shown to be in its misrepresenting the production of knowledges as power-free. Habermas is, however, certainly aware of the power effects of knowledges. His critique of science and ideology shows the way in which science lends itself to ideological formation, and hence serves as an instrument of state domination. Nevertheless, what must be noticed is that knowledge in this case is represented as something which originally stands outside power, but at a certain point falls a prey to power. Habermas's understanding of the power effects of knowledge is still based on the assumption that knowledge is inherently outside power. Foucault's work, I contend, challenges his understanding of an external relation between power and knowledge.

In Foucault's view, the relationship between power and these knowledges is internal rather than external; their relationship is one of constitutive interdependence. He argues,

if sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely if power was able to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse are capable of investing it. (Foucault, 1979b:98)

In other words, power relations constitute the internal condition for the production of knowledges, and, vice versa, knowledges constitute the internal condition for the exercise of power. As knowledges constitute the internal condition for the exercise of power, the power effects that knowledge produces are not, as Habermas assumes, an external, accidental

by-product. Instead, the effects of normalizing power are directly implied in the knowledge of sexuality; power effects circulate right at the point where scientific statements are formed. Therefore, Foucault says, "it is not so much a matter of knowing what external power imposes itself on science, as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statements" (Foucault, 1980b:112). It is also not a matter of how science lends itself to the formation of ideology. In contrast to what Habermas understands, Foucault states that the political question of today should not be considered in terms of "science" and "ideology", but rather in terms of "truth" and "power" (Foucault, 1980b:132).

Preoccupied with a division between truth and falsehood, or truth and ideology, Habermas fails to realize that the problem today is not so much falsehood and ideology, but truth. For him, it seems that truth will make us free; truth would safeguard us from the danger of power and falsehood. Habermas thinks that knowledges should claim superiority according to the standard of truth so as to differentiate themselves from power and falsehood; failing to attain the status of truth would make them susceptible in their relation to power. He contends that if the subjugated knowledges that Foucault advocates cannot claim superiority according to truth, then after conquering the dominant discourse today, the subjugated knowledges may "themselves become the theoretical avant-garde of tomorrow and themselves establish a new hierarchy of power" (Habermas, 1987a:281). For Habermas, truth is that which provides us with comfort; truth is that which protects us from power.

What Habermas seeks is a differentiation of knowledges according to the standard of universal truth. It is a clear, decisive, once-and-for-all division between true and false. This division, for him, is important for the problem of power. He believes that truth is not only external to power, but in opposition to it. From Foucault's perspective, these beliefs are shown to be mistaken. If one is concerned with the problem of power, one should adopt a strategic model which looks into the means by which power effects are produced. One would then see the involvement of

knowledges and truths in the production of power effects. This step is not a differentiation of knowledges according to the standard of truth, but rather a differentiation of the effects and relations they have with certain dominant forms of power. One may give support to those forms of knowledges which oppose a certain dominant form of power. This is what Foucault does in his calling for an insurrection of subjugated knowledges. He supports these knowledges in their opposition to the effects of the centralizing powers that are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse in modern western society. It is true for Habermas to say that the subjugated knowledges may become a dominant discourse tomorrow and subjugate other forms of knowledges. Nevertheless, from the perspective of a strategic model, this is what we should look at -- their relations with certain dominant forms of power -- and this is where the attack is to be launched again. In contrast to Habermas's work, Foucault's approach does not divide knowledges once and for all; nor does it give us comfort in any forms of knowledge. On the contrary, it warns us of the danger; it reminds us to watch over the power effects of any knowledges. The battle goes on; it never ends.

In showing the involvement of truths and knowledges in the production of power effects, Foucault's approach exposes the misguided comfort provided by Habermas's project. Truth does not promise freedom; on the contrary, it is through the constitution of truths and knowledges that power effects are produced. Furthermore, from a strategic model, we see that in order for power to operate, it not only produces truths and knowledges, but also subjectivities. Power does not work through a negation of subjectivities, and resistance does not mean an awakening of subjectivities; on the contrary, power operates through a production of subjectivities. Habermas's notion of communicative action relies upon an a priori notion of modern rational subjectivity. I argue that, from Foucault's perspective, modern rational subjectivities are far from being able to provide us with any comfort; they should, rather, be seen as part of the problem.



Foucault shows that the operation of power depends not only upon the production of perverse subjects, but the production of free, rational, self-reflective subjects. In sex liberation, Foucault argues, individuals are constituted as autonomous and rational subjects who freely discuss sex; as self-reflective subjects who seek self-decipherment of their true nature. In experiencing an autonomous, rational, self-reflective subjectivity, they are subject to new relations of domination, such as those involving the social worker-judge, the psychiatrist-judge, the priest-judge, the teacher-judge, the parent-judge. They are at the same time subject to the effects of the power of normalization. They are drawn into confessional practice. They are required to tell the truth, to reveal the deepest secrets within themselves. Individuals are constituted as autonomous, rational, self-reflective subjects, while at the same time entangled more deeply in a network of power.

Habermas's notion of communicative action presupposes certain rational subjects engaging in free, reflective, undistorted discussion. Power is conceived in terms of distorted communication and a negation of this rational subjectivity. Foucault's approach shows that power operates not so much through a negation of rational subjectivity, but rather through a production of such subjectivity. One can no longer rely upon an ideal of subjectivity to provide any comfort. From the perspective of Foucault, not only is Habermas's ideal of rational, autonomous subjectivity exposed as misguided comfort, but his notion of subjectivity has to be questioned in terms of its involvement in the operation of modern forms of power. Instead of seeing his theory in opposition to power, Habermas is reminded of its danger of being incorporated into the modern knowledge-power-subjectivity alliance.

From the perspective of the strategic model, modern rational subjectivities, truths and scientific knowledges are shown to be involved in the operation of power. They can no longer provide us with comfort or a basis for hope. Habermas, in contrast, tends to see the development of science and theoretical knowledges, and of universal law and morality as

an expression of a form of Enlightenment rationality that has to be preserved, for their cognitive potential points toward a notion of communicative reason. These developments, for Habermas, are the achievements of the Enlightenment, and they should be affirmed. He is critical of Foucault for adopting an anti-Enlightenment stance and for failing to affirm the achievements of the Enlightenment. Is Foucault really, as Habermas thinks, anti-Enlightenment?

First of all, one must understand that Foucault does not mean the Enlightenment was bad and that it consisted only of evils. What he tries to demonstrate is the ambiguities associated with the achievements of the Enlightenment. If one sees the achievement of the Enlightenment reform in terms of a delimitation of the monarchical power to punish, this achievement is shown to be ambiguous because at the same time there was an attack on popular illegalities which uprooted the condition of existence of people from the lower strata; if one sees the achievement of penal reform in terms of a right of protection from torture, this achievement is shown to be ambiguous because at the same time there emerged a new form of power which coerced the body in a different way. From Foucault's work, "achievements" are so much entangled with "evils" that they should no longer be seen as achievements in a pure, innocent, and absolute sense.

Positions of pro-Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment are, therefore, misleading, for they are too simplistic to capture the intricacy of Enlightenment and power. In Foucault's view, one has to refuse choosing between pro-Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment; one has to refuse everything which presents itself in the form of a simplistic and authoritarian alternative: you either accept the Enlightenment and remain within its tradition, or else you criticize the Enlightenment and try to escape from its principles of rationality. Habermas's criticism reveals this mistake. He assumes that Foucault's earlier work is anti-Enlightenment and Foucault's later essays on "What is Enlightenment?" is pro-Enlightenment. Underlying Habermas's view is a "blackmail" of the

Enlightenment that Foucault seeks to subvert, and indeed Foucault's insights lie in his attempt to break free of this "blackmail" of Enlightenment.

In his later writings on "What is Enlightenment?", Foucault identifies the connection between his project and the Enlightenment in terms of a certain philosophical ethos. Nevertheless, this type of philosophical ethos does not consist in laying faith or hope in the Enlightenment. Instead it is oriented to a permanent critique of one's historical mode of being. Foucault's permanent critique demonstrates an example of how he subverts the blackmail of Enlightenment. On the one hand, he acknowledges that the Enlightenment constitutes the historical era in which he is now living; on the other hand, instead of seeking to identify with the Enlightenment tradition, he aims at a permanent critique of the historical era of Enlightenment. Put in another way, while he questions the historical era of Enlightenment, he does not aim at a determinate negation of it. Instead he simultaneously respects the historical reality and experiments with ways of transgressing the limits. In contrast to Habermas's project which is preoccupied with setting up distinctions and binary oppositions between what must be negated and what must be preserved, Foucault's approach subverts these oppositions. It helps us respect the complex reality while seeking a transgression of the limits that are imposed on us.

In sum, from Habermas's perspective, there could be four kinds of weaknesses in Foucault's work: firstly, Foucault's critique fails to provide a yardstick for the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power; secondly, Foucault's knowledges are unable to claim superiority according to the standard of truth; thirdly, his normative positions fail to claim superiority according to the standard of universal validity claims; and fourthly, Foucault adopts an anti-Enlightenment stance and fails to affirm the achievements of the Enlightenment. However, from Foucault's perspective, we see that firstly, the differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate power is a preoccupation of the juridico-discursive model



which Foucault seeks to surpass. Foucault introduces us to a strategic model which focuses not so much on the question of right, that is, how to submit power to the rule of right, but rather on the techniques and mechanisms by which power effects are produced. In this way, one sees that truth is the means through which power operates. Therefore, secondly, instead of appealing to the notion of truth as the ground of critique, Foucault seeks to problematize the status of truth. Thirdly, from the perspective of a strategic model, we see that achievements of the Enlightenment are so "entangled" with "evils" that they can no longer be considered as pure achievements. Foucault is opposed to the simplistic alternative of pro-Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment that Habermas holds, and he engages in a permanent critique of the historical era of the Enlightenment which implies an attempt to break free from this "blackmail" of the Enlightenment. Lastly, we are left with Foucault's lack of a normative ground, and this, in the view of Habermas and many others, is the major problem of his work. Part II will be devoted to a discussion of this issue.

## **7.2 Foucault's Lack of a Normative Ground**

In suspending the question of the ground of critique, Foucault introduces us to a strategic model which is full of insights and contains challenges for Habermas's theory. Nevertheless, the lack of a normative basis in Foucault's critique seems to be a common concern. Habermas as well as some other critics and Foucault's sympathetic commentators all raise the question that Foucault's normative positions would have to imply a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate power, acceptable and unacceptable power.<sup>2</sup> If Foucault does not appeal to certain normative principles, they ask, how could he justify his positions? How could he say

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<sup>2</sup>See Introduction, p.13, footnote 9. Also see Fraser, 1989, 1985a; White, 1986; McCarthy, 1990; Bernstein, 1992.

that a certain power is unacceptable or acceptable, and how could he assert that disciplinary power is unacceptable and that we should oppose it?

Habermas criticizes Foucault's refusal to appeal to normative principles as a kind of cryptonormativism. He says that Foucault understands himself as a dissident who offers resistance to humanistically disguised disciplinary power, but he opts for a value-free historiography. Underlying his indictments of disciplinary power, Habermas claims, one can find a set of normative standards that Foucault refuses to admit. For instance, "the asymmetric relationship between power holders and those subject to power, as well as the reifying effect of technologies of power, which violate the moral and bodily integrity of subjects capable of speech and action are objectionable for Foucault" (Habermas, 1987a:284). Nevertheless, to his disappointment, Foucault never appeals to any normative principles to ground his critique. Habermas comments: if Foucault does not ground his critique in any normative principles, "if it is just a matter of mobilizing counterpower, of strategic battles and wily confrontations, why should we muster any resistance at all against this all-persuasive power ... why fight at all?" Following Fraser, he says: it is only with the introduction of normative notions of some kind that Foucault could begin to tell us what is wrong with the modern power/knowledge regime and why we ought to oppose it (Habermas, 1987a:284).

In this section I shall consider the charge that Foucault lacks a normative basis for his critique. Habermas's criticism is based on his view that one must construct certain normative principles to ground critique so as to command universal, rational consensus. Foucault's work, I argue, should be considered as an alternative to Habermas's normative approach of critique, and its right to be different should be affirmed. Foucault's critique does not produce any normative principles; instead it seeks to question what has been taken for granted, including the normative principles that one often relies upon. It is a form of critique that is oriented to transgression of limits, rather than setting of limits.

### *Difference between Foucault's and Habermas's approaches to critique*

Habermas's normative approach to critique assumes that when you criticize or question something, you must have a normative principle on the basis of which to conduct the critique. The normative principle that Habermas has in mind performs two kinds of function. Firstly, it enables one to differentiate between what is legitimate and illegitimate, what is acceptable and unacceptable. Habermas does not expect critique simply to tell us what is wrong with a certain power, but rather to provide a principle according to which one can have a clear-cut division between legitimate and illegitimate power. Secondly, the normative principle can provide a ground for critique so that its claim can transcend local context and obtain a status of universal truth. With such a normative principle, not only can people's action be regulated in an unambiguous way, but the critique can be considered as justified or well-grounded, and capable of commanding universal assent. For instance, Habermas might think that Foucault's critique of disciplinary power could have appealed to normative principles which affirm the moral and bodily integrity of subjects capable of speech and action. With a construction of these moral principles, from Habermas's perspective, not only could Foucault tell us why disciplinary power is illegitimate and unacceptable, but Foucault's critique could be safely grounded and capable of commanding universal, rational consensus.

With Habermas's approach, critique implies a moral claim that would command universal consensus; it expresses a moral demand to which everybody should submit. The normative principle functions as a principle of legitimation which establishes the rule of right for power. When power operates according to the normative principle, it is considered as legitimate and everyone is obliged to obey; when power violates the principle, it is considered as illegitimate and everyone ought to oppose it. Critique of power not only means a differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power, but expresses a universal claim of



people's obligation to submit to legitimate power and to oppose illegitimate power. Foucault's approach, in contrast, provides us with an alternative understanding to the issue of normative principles and the nature of critique.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of Foucault's critique is not to make a claim that would command universal consensus; nor does it aim at providing any normative principle that would unambiguously regulate our action. It is rather to open up space, to open up thinking by exposing something unthought in it.<sup>4</sup> Instead of worrying about the possibility of coming to a rational agreement, Foucault's critique is a matter of injecting a little anxiety or uncertainty into forms of action and thought. It is a matter of questioning what we have agreed upon, what we have taken for granted. It questions the normative principles that we have internalized and often rely upon.<sup>5</sup> The questioning is, however, not carried out by providing answers to normative questions, but by opening a distance between us and the familiar phenomena, producing discord and unsettling effects. It is a type of philosophical interrogation which "simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject" (Foucault, 1986f:42). Instead of constructing principles to inform people what they are or what they should think and do, Foucault's genealogical critique seeks to separate

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<sup>3</sup> Despite the difference between Foucault's approach and the approach of Habermas's critical theory, for the sake of convenience, I call both approaches as "critique". In a response to Habermas's criticism of Foucault's lack of a normative basis, Dean (1994:133) argues that Foucault's work "is not critique, but rather a critical and effective form of history concerned with the analysis of the differential regimes of truth and their consequences". For an interesting and useful elaboration of Foucault's form of critical history as an alternative to that of critical theory, see Dean, 1994. Also see Rajchman, 1988, for a discussion of the difference between Habermas's and Foucault's conception of philosophical argument and form of critique.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of thinking the unthought; see Hoy, 1988, pp.22ff.

<sup>5</sup> As Dean (1994:133) says, Foucault's work "refuses a universalist normative basis because it does not seek to function on the basis of the defence of universal values. It is concerned rather to analyze and reflect upon the effects of holding such values and their implications in practices. This does not mean that Foucault's position cannot be connected to various normative regimes -- it is just that it is simply not pertinent to the task of genealogy as effective history, as a history that is capable of problematizing that which we take to be true and universal".

out, from the contingency that has made people what they are, the possibility of no longer being, doing and thinking what they are, do, or think. Rather than ask what is necessary and universal, Foucault seeks to separate out what is no longer indispensable for liberty.

In contrast to Habermas's preoccupation with how to construct certain principles that would provide a normative basis for critique, Foucault's approach does not construct such principles. His refusal to provide a normative basis, however, does not mean that his work is value-free, or that it would lead to inaction. He shows us the intensification and excess of power in modern society and therewith mobilizes attacks against power. He analyzes the emergence of a form of power which frames the everyday lives of individuals, the adaptation and refinement of its mechanisms that places under surveillance their everyday behavior, their identity, their activity, their apparently unimportant gestures. He portrays a picture of panoptimized society so as to draw our attention to the danger of modern forms of power. Foucault's critique is both politically engaged and capable of mobilizing people into action. Nevertheless, in doing so, it does not appeal to normative principles but rather shows the danger of certain modern forms of power.<sup>6</sup>

By showing the danger of modern forms of power, Foucault has provided a certain answer to the question of "why fight?". Nevertheless, it is not an answer which says these modern forms of power are bad and therefore everybody must fight against them. The answer provided by Foucault differs from what is expected by Habermas in two ways: firstly, it does not contain normative principles which would divide power into legitimate and illegitimate; secondly, it does not imply any moral demand to which everybody has to submit.

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<sup>6</sup> Dreyfus and Rabinow point out that Foucault is not trying to construct a general theory to justify his action; rather he is offering an interpretive analytic of our current situation. Foucault uses language to articulate an understanding of our situation which moves us to action. His analysis sheds light on the specific dangers that each specific type of power/knowledge produces. See Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986, pp.114ff; 1983, pp.253-64.

Habermas is preoccupied with the construction of a normative principle according to which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. The normative principle that he pursues is not one which simply tells us what is wrong with a certain form of power, but rather one which enables us to have a clear-cut, once-and-for-all division between legitimate and illegitimate power, just like a division between lawful and unlawful. Habermas's pursuit of such a normative principle, I suggest, can be considered in terms of a juridico-discursive conception of power which represents power as one which represses and negates. As power is represented as negative, one seeks to set the limits of power and submit it to the rules of right. Nevertheless, I argue, if one looks at power from the perspective of Foucault's strategic model, a procedure of simple division and rejection is not only inadequate but also dangerous.

A strategic model concerns the totality of means by which power operates. From this perspective, we see that modern subjectivities, truths and scientific knowledges are the means by which power produces effects. In addition, the Enlightenment reforms and the system of rights were shown to be agents of relations of domination. Nevertheless, in demonstrating their roles in the deployment of modern forms of power, Foucault does not mean they are bad and we should launch an attack to defeat them. What Foucault tries to show is a complex interplay between power, knowledges, subjectivities, Enlightenment reforms and the system of right. From his work, we should be able to see why there is great difficulty in eluding the embrace of power, and why the negative conception of power is inadequate and even dangerous in describing the mechanisms of power.<sup>7</sup> If power does not operate through a mere negation but rather through a production of utilities, desires, knowledges and subjectivities, and if it is difficult to embrace the effects of all these connections, resistance could not be imagined as simply a great Refusal. What we need is no longer a principle that informs a simple division and

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<sup>7</sup>Foucault says: "The fact that power is so deeply rooted and the difficulty of eluding its embrace are effects of all these connections. That is why the notion of repression which mechanisms of power are reduced to strikes me as very inadequate and possibly dangerous" (Foucault, 1980a:59) .



rejection, that is, a division between legitimate and illegitimate power and a rejection of the illegitimate. Instead, Foucault suggests a simultaneous respect for this complex reality and an attempt to transgress it.

In showing the danger of certain modern forms of power, Foucault does not mean they are bad and have to be rejected.<sup>8</sup> Criticism, for Foucault, is not a matter of drawing the line between legitimate and illegitimate, or between black and white, good and bad, true and false; nor does it mean a rejection or negation. Criticism is instead a reflection upon the complex reality and the limits that have been imposed on us, while patiently experimenting with the possibility of transgressing the limits. The critical task, Foucault says, "requires work on our limits, that is, a patient labor giving form to our impatience for liberty" (Foucault, 1984d:50). Therefore, in contrast to Habermas, Foucault's critique does not seek to provide any normative principle according to which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power.

For Habermas, only with a construction of normative principles can critique be seen as safely grounded and capable of commanding universal, rational consensus. Critique of power, for him, does not only seek a differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power, but also expresses a universal demand of people's obligation to submit to legitimate power and to oppose illegitimate power. Foucault's approach to critique, I argue, should not be seen as implying any moral demand to which everybody must submit. In pointing out the danger of disciplinary power, Foucault's critique serves as a tactic to mobilize counterpower. It moves people to fight, but it does not lay a moral demand on people and claims that everyone must resist disciplinary power; it mobilizes counterpower, but it never demands one's obligation to resist.

I acknowledge that Foucault himself does not always refrain from making moral demands, and it is a weakness of his work that it seems to

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<sup>8</sup> Foucault (1986b:343) clarifies that to say that something is dangerous is not to say that it is bad. If things are dangerous, then we always have something to do, and this should lead us to pessimistic activism rather than apathy.

imply a moral demand of people to resist disciplinary power. Habermas sees that Foucault tells people to resist disciplinary power but fails to construct any normative principles to justify the demand. Habermas's understanding of Foucault, I contend, is caused by some of the confusions in Foucault's work. It is true that Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* often relates disciplinary power to coercion and domination, and Foucault calls for an anti-disciplinarian politics. Taken together, these lead people to think that disciplinary power is bad and people ought to resist it. Moreover, in a later interview, Foucault defines domination in a pejorative sense by referring to it as "relations of power that are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and the margin of liberty is extremely limited" (Foucault 1988a:12). He suggests minimizing domination by giving "one's self the rules of law, ... the practice of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination" (Foucault, 1988a:18). Hence it seems that Foucault's work contains a moral demand that one ought to resist disciplinary power and domination.

In *History of Sexuality* Vol. 1, however, Foucault (1979b:82) comes to see his work as "an analytics of power: a definition of domains formed by relations of power". This is the perspective of a strategic model that I suggest throughout my discussion. From this perspective, disciplinary power should not be seen as necessarily bad, but rather as something which produces utility, individuality and knowledge. Moreover, domination, too, should not be seen as something bad or to be resisted. In the same interview, Foucault discusses relations of domination in the pedagogical institution. He does not think that one should avoid these relations of domination, but rather some of the effects associated with them, including what happened to a student when subjected to the arbitrary and useless authority of a teacher.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Foucault says: "I don't see where evil is in the practice of someone who, in a given name of truth, knowing more than another, tells him what he must do, teaches him, transmits knowledge to him, communicates skills to him. The problem is rather to know how you are to avoid in these practices -- where power cannot not play and where it is not evil in itself-- the effects of domination which will make a child subject to the arbitrary and useless

With an acknowledgment of some of the confusions of Foucault's work, I suggest that one should not see Foucault's critique in terms of a moral demand to which everybody must submit. It does not provide any principle of legitimation according to which one is obliged to obey or resist. Whether one should obey or resist is a question left to the individual's decision. In calling for anti-disciplinarian politics, it is not a demand that one must take part in it. Instead, Foucault identifies his role as giving support to those who choose to fight, and suggesting the ways they might resist.

For instance, Foucault speaks to those who find disciplinary power intolerable and who want to fight against it: "if one wants to look for a non-disciplinary form of power, or rather, to struggle against discipline and disciplinary power, it is not toward the ancient right of sovereignty that one should return, but toward the possibility of a new form of right" (Foucault, 1980c:108). Seeing that there are struggles developed in recent years "against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission", Foucault speaks to those who engage in the struggles: "Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are ... We have to promote new forms of subjectivity ..." (Foucault, 1982:212, 216). Foucault may make normative statements about what one should do. Nevertheless, they should be considered as suggestions in relation to where and how to attack power. The normative statements should not be understood as normative principles which legitimate power or resistance. Whether to fight or not is a question that left to the reflection and decision of the individual. As Gordon notes:

Foucault has made clear, the object is not the fabrication of a knowledge for the instruction, correction and guidance of every possible resistance. At this point the

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authority of a teacher, or put a student under the power of an abusively authoritarian professor and so forth" (Foucault, 1988a:12). Patton (1994:65) points out that asymmetrical power relations are not in themselves evil. Foucault's use of this example shows certain objectionable cases of domination, but suggests that there can be other effects of domination which may not be objectionable. Patton maintains that "this indeed appears to be Foucault's general position: the exercise of power over others is not always bad, and states of domination are not always to be avoided".



contribution of the intellectual as historical analyst ends and gives way to the reflection and decisions, not of the managers and theoreticians of resistance but of those who themselves choose to resist. (Gordon, 1979:44)

In sum, I suggest that one should see Foucault's critique as an alternative to Habermas's normative approach of critique. It concerns reflection upon the limits that have been imposed on people. The reflection, however, does not seek a procedure of division and rejection; it is rather a matter of simultaneous respect for the complex reality while experimenting with the possibility of transgressing it. Moreover, Foucault's critique serves as a tactic which moves people to fight, but it does not make any moral demand to which everybody must submit. It does not provide any principles which legitimate power or resistance and demand people's obligation to obey or resist. While Foucault provides us with an alternative way of looking at power, nevertheless, there are still questions, difficulties, and limitations associated with this approach that require our attention.

#### *Questions, difficulties, limitations of Foucault's critique*

Foucault's critique is characterized by a suspension of the normative question. What is the nature of this suspension and what implications does it have?<sup>10</sup> For instance, does it imply a rejectionist stance toward all normative frameworks? Or does it merely reject certain values and frameworks, like those of humanism? Does it stop us from producing normative notions? Moreover, would there be any difficulties caused by Foucault's suspension of the normative question? What are the limitations of Foucault's critique?

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<sup>10</sup> See Fraser, 1989, pp.21ff; for her discussion of the nature and extent of Foucault's bracketing of the normative question, .

One may read Foucault's work as rejecting all normative framework for a normative reason: norm is normalizing. That is, in order to avoid being part of normalizing power, one should refrain from producing any norms. Bernstein's understanding of Foucault's reason for refusing normative foundation is an example: "For Foucault, talk about 'normative foundations' elicits 'normalization', which he takes to be one of the primary dangers of the disciplinary society". This reading of Foucault, I contend, confuses two senses of "norm": "norm as normative", and "norm as normalizing". When norm is understood as normative, it means that norm is based on values and moral principles in the regulation of people's behavior. Normative theories are those which are involved in the production of norms which are normative. On the other hand, when referring to norm as normalizing, Foucault means that power now takes the form of norm rather than law; power normalizes rather than prohibits.<sup>11</sup> Disciplinary power, in Foucault's view, operates through the setting up of a principle of rule, or a norm, which functions as a minimum threshold, as an average, or as an optimum to be respected. The setting up of a norm allows five quite distinct operations to come into play. The power of penalty, Foucault says, compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes and excludes; in short, it normalizes (Foucault 1979a:182-3). Norm can be considered as the normative; norm can also be understood as normalizing in Foucault's specific analyses of the operation of power. Nevertheless, one cannot say that the normative is normalizing and for this reason Foucault refuses the normative, including all normative frameworks. To say so would have failed to make a differentiation between "norm as normative" and "norm as normalizing".

One might refuse normative frameworks by referring to the strategic model. One may say, from the strategic model we see that power operates through a constitution of norms, in addition to its constitution of

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<sup>11</sup> In discussing the development of bio-power, Foucault says that power is now to enhance life rather than to take life. It is the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gives power its access to our body. In order to take charge of life, it needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms. This leads to a growing importance of the action of the norm, and even the law now operates more and more as a norm (Foucault, 1979b:143-4).

knowledges and subjectivities, and we should negate them in order to counter power. In opposition to this reading of Foucault, I would like to point out that if Foucault's approach meant that power constitutes everything, and hence either we had to oppose everything or we were all trapped in it, then Foucault would have kept the biggest negative hypothesis for his own use. He would have kept the practical consequence of a juridico-discursive representation of power-as-law which simply negates and represses, and sees norms, subjectivities and knowledges as instruments of power that are bad in themselves. Foucault has anticipated the possibility that people might raise this question for his strategic model. He says, they might criticize:

By constantly referring to positive technologies of power, you are playing a double game where you hope to win on all counts; you confuse your adversaries by appearing to take the weaker position, and, discussing repression alone, you would have us believe, wrongly, that you have rid yourself of the problem of law; and yet you keep the essential practical consequence of the principle of power-as-law, namely the fact that there is no escaping from power, that it is always-already present, constituting that very thing which one attempts to counter it with. As to the idea of a power-repression, you have retained its most fragile theoretical element, and this in order to criticize it; you have retained the most sterilizing political consequence of the idea of power-law, but only in order to preserve it for your own use. (Foucault, 1979b:82)

It is important to notice that the strategic model should not have kept the negative hypothesis for its own use. In showing that power operates through the production of knowledges, subjectivities and even norms, it does not mean that they are bad in themselves or that we must refrain from producing any knowledges, subjectivities and norms. Foucault (1980a:192-3) makes it clear that he does not want one to take his work as anti-psychiatry when his genealogy shows how psychiatry constitutes the condition for sexuality to be the target of power. Foucault also states clearly that he is not anti-Enlightenment when showing how the Enlightenment



reforms are intermeshed with new relations of domination. What the strategic model tries to show is a complex interplay between power on the one hand, and knowledges, subjectivities, norms on the other. What it wants to emphasize is their tactical efficacy or strategic role in a power complex. While it is true that knowledge of psychiatry made possible a strong advance of social controls into the area of sexual perversity, Foucault (1979b:101) points out that it also made possible a reverse discourse: homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturalness' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabularies, using the same categories provided by the discourses and knowledges. Therefore, instead of negating certain knowledges once and for all, we should see what kinds of power effects they ensure, and question their tactical integration with a certain power complex.

With regard to the question of norms or normative framework, I suggest that Foucault's strategic model does not imply a rejection of all kinds of normative frameworks, but rather a questioning of the strategic role of certain normative frameworks played in the deployment of modern power. In particular, Foucault questions the role of humanist values in the modern power complex.<sup>12</sup> He shows that humanist values like emancipation, autonomy and subjectivity could not provide us with the basis of hope; instead, they are part of the problem. For instance, modern forms of power are shown to operate through the constitution of autonomous subjectivity; the reliance on construction of humanist frameworks only conceals the operation of modern forms of power. If humanist values are the problem rather than the solution, what shall we do with them? Foucault provides an example of what we may do with humanist frameworks.

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<sup>12</sup> Foucault (1988c:15) also questions humanism in terms of its presenting a dogmatic and universal model of freedom: "What I am afraid of about humanism is that it presents a certain form of our ethics as a universal model for any kind of freedom. I think that there are more secrets, more possible freedoms, and more inventions in our future than we can imagine in humanism as it is dogmatically represented on every side of the political rainbow: the Left, the Centre, the Right".

In his critique, Foucault suspends the normative question and avoids appealing to any humanist notions. This should not be seen so much as a rejection of normative frameworks, but rather as a reflection on the limits that have been imposed on us and an experimenting with the possibility of transgressing the limits. On the one hand, Foucault works on the limits by carrying out a genealogical analysis which questions the humanist values that we have taken for granted; on the other hand, he seeks to transgress the limits by conducting a critique which is politically engaged while at the same time refusing to appeal to humanist values which are often seen as necessary for critique. One may not be able to conclude whether his experimenting with a transgression of the limits is a complete success, but at least one can appreciate his work from this perspective.

There are, however, other ways that we may treat humanist values or normative frameworks. As discussed above, psychiatry made possible an intensification of power, but there is also a reverse discourse in which homosexuality began to speak for itself, using the same vocabularies and categories found in psychiatry by which it is disqualified. In this sense, it is possible to have a reverse of humanist discourses so that they can be turned around and used to oppose modern forms of power. According to Foucault, "discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it ... discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1979b:101). In other words, one may conceive of humanist discourses as tactical elements which operate in a field of power relations. The tactical function that they perform is neither uniform nor stable. Sometimes they serve power and other times they resist power. It is dangerous to say humanist discourses are bad and should be discarded once and for all.

Foucault's discussion of the notion of right may give some clue as to how we might treat normative frameworks. While demonstrating the system of right as permanent agent of relations of domination, permanent agent of polymorphous techniques of subjugation, Foucault nevertheless

thinks that there is no other recourse available to us in the fight against power. He claims that we are in a kind of double alley: on the one hand, it is not through the recourse to sovereignty against discipline that the effects of disciplinary power can be limited, as rights and disciplinary mechanisms are two absolutely integral constituents of the general mechanism of power in our society; on the other hand, in real life, what do the organizations that oppose power do if not precisely appeal to this canon of right? (Foucault, 1980c:108). Hence, we cannot afford to give up the whole discourse of right; we still need to appeal to normative notions of right in our fight against power. While we are not able to give up the whole discourse of right, nevertheless, we can make an innovative use of it.<sup>13</sup> Foucault suggests that we can turn toward a new form of right. It is not the right derived from the traditional right of sovereignty, the right grounded in the discovery of what we are and what we can be. These rights lend support to the development of disciplinary power; they are agents of relations of domination, agents of polymorphous techniques of subjugation. The new form of right, Foucault suggests, should be anti-disciplinarian. It should take "life" as a political object, as the issue of political struggles. It is "the right to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs" (Foucault, 1979b:145; 1980c:108).

In our fight against power, we still need to appeal to normative notions. Nevertheless, I argue, normative notions should simply be seen as tools that one might use to oppose power. Being "tools", they are subject to our use. They are not the foundation of our critique or action. They are not to be seen as principles which enable critique to be safely grounded and capable of commanding universal, rational consensus. Nor can they be considered as a principle of legitimation, as one which affirms that a certain power or resistance is legitimate and thus demanding everybody's obligation to obey. Seeing normative notions as tools, we are concerned with their usefulness in the fight. We are not concerned with which of

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<sup>13</sup> In a fight for the defence of the Vietnamese boat people, Foucault invokes the notion of "international citizenry" and appeals to the normative notion of right. See Keenan, 1987, pp.20ff; for an interesting discussion of how Foucault uses the discourse of right.



them is closer to reality or truth, which of them reveals our true nature or informs us of the essence of history. The usefulness of a tool is not to be evaluated according to a theory of truth, but rather in relation to the specific contexts of struggles in which they are used. The idea of tools allows one to choose which normative notions are useful and which combination of tools one may use. It also allows people to invent their own tools or to improve the tools in their own way.

From this perspective, Habermas's notion of communicative action should not be seen as a principle that legitimates power or a ground of critique, but rather simply as a tool one may use in the fight against power. The notion of a free, undistorted communication can be used as a tool to question power relations. As Foucault suggests in an interview, "it is perhaps a critical idea to maintain at all times: to ask oneself what proportion of nonconsensuality is implied in such a power relation, and whether that degree of nonconsensuality is necessary or not, and then one may question every power relation to that extent" (Foucault, 1986d:379). One can perhaps practise a politics of consensuality. Habermas's problem lies in his removing the political statement of the notion of ideal speech situation from the realm of political discourse, recasting it in a neutral, intellectualist language of universal pragmatics, and treating it as a universal basis of critique or action.

In short, Foucault's critique does not imply a rejectionist stance toward all normative notions. Instead it teaches us how to treat these normative notions: as tools rather than as principles of legitimation or foundations of critique. If normative notions can be used as tools in our fight against power, we should not refrain from producing normative notions. On the contrary, we need to invent more tools for the fight. If Foucault's critique aims at opening up space, the question one may ask is: after successfully opening up space, what are we going to do with the space? Perhaps we can use the space to elaborate normative notions that are useful for the fight. I believe that Foucault's critique would be happy to see the space taken up by the invention of tools used in the fight. One may devote effort to

elaborating normative notions like care for self, care for otherness, and so on, so as to counter modern forms of power. The effort to elaborate these normative notions, however, must be distinguished from that of developing certain uncontested principles of legitimation or ground of action, for the latter may include projects which investigate what is necessary and fixed in our existence. In elaborating normative notions, one must bear in mind that they are simply tools to be used, and though they may result in setting certain new limits, they are nevertheless limits that await transgression.

I have discussed the implications of Foucault's critique for how we should treat normative notions. Now we come to the difficulties caused by Foucault's suspension of the normative question, as well as the limitation of his approach of critique. From the perspective of Foucault's critique, normative notions are not bases which ground our action, but rather simply tools we use to fight against power. Habermas and other universalists would question this approach in terms of the groundlessness of one's action. As discussed before, Habermas asks: why should we muster any resistance at all? Why is struggle preferable to submission? If one is to adopt Foucault's approach, perhaps the first difficulty one has to face is a kind of groundlessness of one's resistance or action. Of course, one may answer the question of "why fight?" by referring to the danger that one perceives in society.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, there would not be a moral ground capable of commanding universal, rational consensus. One must be able to be at home with this kind of groundlessness.

In relation to the lack of a universal moral ground for resistance, the other kind of difficulty caused by Foucault's approach is the lack of a

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<sup>14</sup> Or, as Dean (1994:130) points out, one may answer "why fight?" and question power "from a variety of ethical, political and technical perspectives, such as potential for individual or collective choice, degree of participation in decision-making, their cumbersome nature, and so on". One does not have to evoke universal normative standpoints and political visions from which forms of power might be judged. As argued by Deans, Foucault's approach has the "capacity to multiply forms of criticism while abstaining from the sacred and hierarchical duty of the social critic to speak from the position of privileged access to a superior world or set of values".

yardstick. White, for instance, sees that Foucault's contribution lies in his reminding us of an exclusion of otherness in the process of rationalization. Nevertheless, he goes on, Foucault does not provide us with a criterion to distinguish different forms of otherness; nor does he provide us with any basis for the distinction of different kinds of resistance and social movement. "He provides us, ultimately, with no way of distinguishing the resistance of the women's movement or the Polish Solidarity movement from, say, the Ku Klux Klan or Jim Jones's People's Temple" (White, 1986:430). Bernstein, who attempts a sympathetic reading of Foucault's work, also makes the following comment: Foucault is constantly tempting us with his references to new possibilities of thinking and acting, but these references are in danger of becoming empty unless we have some sense of which possibilities and changes are desirable and why (Bernstein, 1992:301).

Though these comments are made in Foucault's language, nevertheless, they pursue the same old question of a yardstick. Habermas pursues the question of a yardstick according to which one can differentiate legitimate and illegitimate power. For him, Foucault's critique owes us a criterion based on which one can distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate power. For White, Foucault owes us a criterion based on which one can distinguish acceptable from unacceptable resistance; for Bernstein, Foucault owes us a criterion which enables one to distinguish desirable from undesirable changes.

I think it must be admitted that Foucault's critique does not provide a clear yardstick for us to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate power, acceptable and unacceptable resistance, desirable and undesirable changes. If one expects Foucault's work to provide such an answer, one is certain to be disappointed. For those who pursue the question of a yardstick, this can be considered as a major limitation of Foucault's critique. Yet, before deciding whether the criticism is justified, we should ask whether we still need to pursue the question of a yardstick. In the above discussion, I have pointed out that, from a strategic model, the



question of differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate implies a juridico-discursive model that Foucault seeks to surpass. I have also suggested that leaving behind this question we would be able to focus on the techniques and mechanisms through which power effects are produced. Moreover, from Foucault's perspective, critique of power is not a matter of providing a procedure of simple division and rejection, but rather of reflecting upon the limits that are imposed on us while experimenting with the possibility of transgressing the limits.

In addition, what must be pointed out is that Foucault's refusal to specify a principle for the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate power is a determination to leave the question to the reflection and decision of individuals. This approach confines the role of theoreticians to a critical-historical analysis and respects individuals' judgement and decision. Its advantage lies in the self-limitation of theoreticians so that they are not going to proclaim normative principles from above. Habermas, in order to construct a principle of critique, carries out a quasi-transcendental project which investigates the universal conditions of intersubjective understanding. The investigation, however, is not so much an understanding of the perspective of those participating in intersubjective communication. Instead, Habermas raises himself above the participants, engages in a monological reflection, and proclaims the truth about language from above. He declares that "[t]he human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori ... Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus" (Habermas, 1978:314).

I acknowledge that Foucault's refusal to provide a yardstick has created difficulties but, at the same time, it is an attempt to conduct critique which really respects individuals' reflection and decision. Individuals no longer need to wait for the instruction of a master, but can rather exercise their sense of judgement with regard to which power is acceptable or unacceptable, which change is desirable or undesirable.

The reflection and decision that individuals have to make include what is the main danger. As Foucault says:

My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous ... I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger. (Foucault, 1986b:343)

Foucault's work does not answer the normative question, but it moves people to act by portraying a picture of the danger of modern western societies. As elaborated by Dreyfus and Rabinow (1986:115), Foucault's work can be seen as an interpretive approach which identifies what he takes to be our current problem or main danger, describing with detachment how this situation arose and, at the same time, using rhetorical skills to increase shared uneasiness in the face of the ubiquitous danger as he extrapolated it. For instance, it portrays the danger of a disciplinary society in which normalizing power has become so omnipresent, so finely attuned, so penetrating and interiorized, and therefore so invisible that it no longer requires the virtual presence of psychoanalysts, priests or wardens. It is a fully panoptimized society in which the hierarchical, asymmetrical domination of some persons by others would become superfluous and individuals would all police themselves.

Nevertheless, one must notice that this is the danger that Foucault perceives, and other people, such as Habermas, could have perceived a different kind of danger. As elaborated by Fraser, Foucault's nightmare is a fully panoptimized society: "even a perfectly realized autonomous subjectivity would be a form of normalizing, disciplinary domination"; even if the ideal speech situation were realized, this would not be freedom (Fraser, 1985a:180,181). Fraser points out that Habermas also has his own fear and perceives a different kind of danger.

Habermas fears "the end of the individual", a form of life in which people are no longer socialized to demand rational, normative legitimation of social authority. In

this dystopian vision, they just cynically go along out of privatized strategic considerations, and the stance of communicative interaction in effect dies out. (Fraser, 1985a:180-1)

If Habermas's notion of an ideal speech situation cannot safeguard against the danger perceived by Foucault, I contend, Foucault's work is also unable to safeguard against the danger perceived by Habermas. One must realize this limitation of Foucault's work. Foucault's work is an interpretive approach which identifies *what he takes* to be our current problem or main danger. One could identify another danger. Moreover, as Foucault says, the danger that we identified earlier may have been changed and there would be new problems.<sup>15</sup> One must exercise one's own sense of judgement.

Therefore, I conclude, what we obtain from Foucault is not a set of doctrines, but a certain attitude, a certain way of philosophizing and, above all, a certain awareness of the danger in modern western societies. Yet each individual still has to make the ethico-political choice to determine which is the main danger, and it is a decision that one should make every day. There is no unassailable principle of criterion of judgement provided to guide or regulate our action. Each of us must make the decision every day to determine which is the main danger in our own society.

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<sup>15</sup> In an interview, Foucault gives support to Castel's analysis of mental hospitals and holds that it was right to criticize mental hospitals as they were the danger. Nevertheless, Foucault contends that the danger has changed and there are new problems with the more free clinics (Foucault, 1986b:343-4).



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